

MOBILIZING THE CHADIAN CHURCH TO UNDERSTAND AND TREAT
ALCOHOLISM

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BY
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This project is dedicated:

- To God who so loved the world, and to Jesus Christ his Son who has come to seek out and to save the lost, and
- To everybody who has a deep concern for the recovery and the salvation of those who are struggling with alcohol addiction.

If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free... everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

♦ *John 8:31-32, 34-36*

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ABSTRACT

This work focuses on mobilizing the Chadian Church by training its pastors, leaders, and devoted Christians to understand the issue of alcoholism and treat it. In other words it seeks to help them understand why people drink alcohol, how dangerous it is to drink too much alcohol, and how they can help those struggling with alcohol find recovery.

First, the thesis defines what alcoholism is, then identifies its causes and effects on drinkers themselves, on their families, and on the society.

Second, it shows a clear biblical teaching about alcohol consumption, about drunkenness that can lead to eternal separation with God, and about progressive sanctification as way for Christians to embrace recovery from alcohol abuse, dependency, and addiction.

Third, it suggests that the Christian 12 Steps to recovery based on biblical selected verses constitute a powerful tool to transform many lives if pastors and church leaders at all levels are trained to use them wisely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the "Higher Power" model in the Alcoholics Anonymous' approach, which is not precise about the nature of God, the Christian 12 Steps to recovery are Christ-focused. Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life; there is no other way to the Father but through Him (John 3:16). Only Jesus Christ has the power to set people free from the bondage of alcoholism and to give them eternal life.

The work includes the results of the participants' evaluation on a training seminar for pastors and church leaders and concludes with a chapter highlighting the outcomes established by the study.

INTRODUCTION

Why writing a Doctor of Ministry thesis on alcoholism? The motivation is worth of consideration. During the general bi-annual meeting of my denomination, "Assemblees Chretiennes au Tchad" that is Plymouth Brethren in Chad in February 2009 in the city of Laï, in Chad, one of pastors stood up and challenged the audience on the issue of alcohol consumption. "We must do something, we must make a decision about alcohol consumption in church" he said, and then he added "I don't know the situation in other local churches but in my local church, some Christians drink alcohol, some even get drunk, and some women sell alcohol beverages. When I put some of them under church discipline they are mad at me and many keep drinking alcohol... Can Christians drink alcohol now? We must make a general decision about this issue."

Although the raised issue was worth of consideration it was not discussed because it was not part of the agenda of the meeting. Two months later I had the opportunity to begin my D.Min. program in Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in pastoral skills track. When I was assigned to choose a topic for my "thesis-project" proposal, I decided to look closely at the issue of alcohol consumption that the pastor challenged my denomination with. In the beginning, I phrased my topic in terms of "The Effects of Alcoholism on Sexuality and Marriage." Later, with the help of my mentor I rephrased it to make it practical, "MOBILIZING THE CHADIAN CHURCH TO UNDERSTAND AND TREAT ALCOHOLISM." With this in mind, not only do I seek to answer the question of whether Christians can drink alcohol or not, but also to help pastors, Church leaders, and Christians understand the issue of alcoholism and treat it. In other words I

seek to help them understand why people drink alcohol, how dangerous it is to drink too much alcohol, and how they can help those struggling with alcohol.

In order to reach my goal, I will develop this theme in five chapters. The first chapter will present the problem of alcoholism and its setting; this will include the problem of alcoholism in general but also in the Chadian Church particularly. The second chapter will be the biblical/theological foundation of the project. The third chapter will present the literature review on the issue of alcoholism and its treatment today. The fourth chapter will present the project design that is what I actually did. Finally, the fifth chapter will present the outcomes of the project.

CHAPTER ONE: PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Before I begin to address the 'Problem and Its Setting,' I must first give a working definition of alcoholism and its derivative alcohol and alcoholic.

What Is Alcoholism?

Alcoholism is defined as "any form of alcohol drinking that exceeds the traditional and current food consumption, or beyond the scope of social habits."¹

There are two forms of alcoholism: *acute alcoholism* is a temporary disruption of behavior resulting from alcohol ingestion and *chronic alcoholism* which is a set of somatic and neuropsychiatric disorders associated with the repeated, excessive and prolonged absorption of alcohol.²

In medical language, drunkenness is *acute alcoholism*. It is the result of a clearly excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages, either after a meal or throughout the day. The level of alcohol in the blood exceeds 1 gr. of alcohol per liter of blood; it could amount to 5 and even 6 gr. This can lead to death.³

The most frequent case is that of *chronic alcoholism*. This is the case of a man who did not seem to drink to excess, often has never been drunk in his life, but whom, throughout his day drinks a little more alcohol than his body cannot remove. As soon as his blood exceeds 0.8% and tends to stay there (except usually at night), he runs

¹ Serges Kernbaum, ed., *Dictionnaire de Médecine Flammarion* (Paris: Flammarion Médecine-Science, 1998), 34.

² Kernbaum, *Dictionnaire de Médecine Flammarion*, 33.

³ Jean Humbert, *Une Réflexion Chrétienne sur l'Alcoolisme* (Bevaix, Switzerland: Radio et Parole de Vie, 1980), 7.

the risk of becoming an alcoholic and suffer the consequences in his health over the coming years (in 10 , 20 or 30 years, sometimes more, sometimes less).⁴

A simple definition of alcoholism according to Roger J. Williams is "a tendency to drink too much alcohol."⁵ For the purpose of clarity, Williams adds,

Since some are convinced that any amount of alcohol consumed is "too much," the definition needs clarification – *too much* for what? It seems obvious that there are all degrees of alcoholism and that drawing a hard and fast line between what is alcoholism and what is not is difficult or impossible. I would say, however, that anyone who drinks enough alcohol to interfere with his or her activities as useful and productive citizen is a victim of alcoholism. If this interference is slight – and can be guaranteed to remain so – the case is mild. If the interference with productive work is serious, then the case of alcoholism is correspondingly severe.⁶

Before we close the definition of alcoholism, it is necessary to look at its derivative alcohol and alcoholic.

The *Webster's Dictionary* defines alcohol as "a colorless volatile flammable liquid C_2H_5OH that is the intoxicating agent of fermented and distilled liquors."⁷

There are at least two kinds of alcohol: *benzyl alcohol* and *ethyl alcohol*.⁸

Throughout this thesis when we use the word alcohol we refer to *ethyl alcohol*. This is the essential substance present in wine, beer, and distilled spirits, which gives them their most characteristic properties.

According to Hoff,

The Substance of Alcohol (known chemically as *ethanol*) is expressed by the formula C_2H_5OH . A molecule of ethyl alcohol is composed of two atoms of carbon, six atoms of hydrogen, and one of oxygen. Other alcohols exist – for example, methyl alcohol (wood alcohol, CH_3OH) and so-called *higher* alcohols

⁴ Humbert, *Une Réflexion Chrétienne sur l'Alcoolisme*, 7-8.

⁵ Roger J. Williams, *Alcoholism the Nutritional Approach* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 3.

⁶ Williams, *Alcoholism the Nutritional Approach*, 3-4.

⁷ *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1970), 21.

⁸ Kernbaum, *Dictionnaire de Médecine Flammarion*, 33.

with three, four, five, or more carbon atoms in the molecule. Methyl alcohol is well known as dangerous poison. These higher alcohols are present in small amounts in alcoholic beverages usually referred to as *congeners*. Some studies of congeners indicate that they may have some inebriating effect upon the human being, but essentially the effects of alcoholic beverages can be ascribed to the ethyl alcohol which they contain.⁹

Hoff went further in adding interesting details about the percentage of alcohol in different kinds of alcoholic beverages,

There are many kinds of alcoholic beverages. *Wine* is made from grapes or other fruits and berries and may have an alcohol content as high as 12 to 14 percent. Some wines, such as sherry, are "fortified" (given a higher alcoholic content) by adding brandy or grain alcohol. *Beers* and *ales* are prepared by fermenting a broth made from malted grains. The starch in the grain is converted to sugar and the yeast acts upon the sugar. Hops are usually added to give the beverage a characteristic bitter taste. Beers contain some 3 to 6 percent alcohol.¹⁰

Knowing alcohol as the intoxicating agent of fermented and distilled liquors, it is important to notice how Humbert describes the alcoholic,

The alcoholic is the man who, having acquired the habit of drinking more alcohol than his body can not eliminate, is uncomfortable when his blood does not contain a certain dose, dose often low enough that it never reaches the stage of drunkenness. His psychological equilibrium is now disturbed to the point that he feels "normal" with a positive breath test. In reality, he is intoxicated: Alcohol disturbs his psyche (so he is no longer aware of his condition), liver, overworked, will degenerate (that's cirrhosis), his health ruined. Needing alcohol and cannot do without it (he lost the freedom to abstain), he is an "addict" of alcohol.¹¹

The Expert Committee of the World Health Organization also defined the term alcoholics as follows,

Alcoholics are those excessive drinkers whose dependence upon alcohol has attained such a degree that it shows a noticeable mental disturbance or an interference with their bodily and mental health, their interpersonal relationships and their smooth social and economic functioning, or who show the prodromal signs of such developments. They therefore require treatment.¹²

⁹ Ebbe Curtis Hoff, M.D., *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), 21.

¹⁰ Hoff, *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction*, 23.

¹¹ Humbert, *Une Réflexion Chrétienne sur l'Alcoolisme*, 46-47.

¹² Markus Grant and Paul Gwinner, ed., *Alcoholism in Perspective* (Lodon: Croom Helm Ltd, 1979), 42.

Now that we looked at the derivatives of alcoholism that are alcohol and alcoholic, we can conclude that alcoholism is this loss of freedom in relation to alcohol. In other words, alcoholism is addiction. This addiction is manifested by the appearance of severe disorders when the body is deprived of alcohol. It is a lack: shaking, sweating, anxiety, general discomfort. These conditions calm down when one drinks alcoholic beverages. He who is an alcoholic is caught in a vicious circle: no alcohol, he feels bad, very bad. With alcohol, he is a slave and destroyed himself more and more, obsessed with the fear of running out. Alcohol is a real drug, a product that is addictive. One can no longer do without it. If so, what then causes people to drink alcohol until being addicted to it?

Causes of Alcoholism: Why Do People Drink?

Human beings consume alcohol for various reasons that can be grouped into three categories (personal, social and economic).¹³

1. Personal or Individual Causes:

a) The taste of alcohol: Some people drink alcohol because they like the taste of it. When asked why they drink alcohol, some alcoholics respond that this was their experience. Some others do not like the taste of alcohol at first, but can grow it to the length of time.

b) The effect of alcohol: Other people hate the taste of alcohol, but they like the effect it produces. It makes them feel good; it produces euphoria, a sense of well-being. It seems that alcohol can free them from their tensions and stresses of life,

¹³ Humbert, *Une Réflexion Chrétienne sur l'Alcoolisme*, 14-15.

worries and anxieties and makes them forget their problems. It frees them from shyness, inferiority complex, shame and fear and gives them the opportunity to have a good time, not to be retained, to say and do things they would not otherwise have said or done without alcohol. It makes their company of drinking appreciated and tolerant; also, conversation around alcohol seems more interesting and jokes funny. Some drinkers - even for the case of severe alcoholism - insist that they do not like the taste of alcohol. In fact, they hate it. However, they drink it again and again because it allows them to escape many problems that bother them in their life.

It is evident that men have found numerous ways of escape in the face of daily tensions. The simple principle of escape is to be totally absorbed in something completely unrelated to one's regular responsibilities. So the work of a man can be the relaxation of another man. A mechanic can get relaxation in reading a book while a teacher can become absorbed with the tools of a mechanic. Gardening, sports and all outdoor activities are favorite ways to relax and escape. At the end of an exhausting day, many men and women have no other recourse but to collapse in a chair and watch TV and movies. But again, it is easy for many people to drink as the escape way, the easiest and shortest. In the early stages of the alcohol, the individual usually maintains the hope that his anxieties and tensions will be effectively relieved by a drink or two. But this does not work always as Harding wrote,

Alcohol may help anxious people cope in the short term, but over time this strategy can backfire. According to a new study in the Archives of General Psychiatry, self-medicating with alcohol or drugs can increase the risk of alcoholism and other substance-abuse problems, without addressing the underlying anxiety.

"People probably believe that self-medication works," says James M. Bolton, M.D., the lead author of the study and an assistant professor of psychiatry and psychology at the University of Manitoba, in Winnipeg. "What people do not realize is that this quick-fix method actually makes things worse in the long term."¹⁴

Many people who experience chronic feelings of anxiety about social situations, work and relationships, or other aspects of everyday life often reach for a beer or a glass of wine to quell their unease. Unfortunately those who develop this habit and do not hold to drink become alcoholics later. Drinking as way of escape is however dangerous as Arnold Come explains,

Man becomes anxious because he cannot be happy while bored. A significant degree of the increase of drinking and of alcoholism among women can be traced to this boredom. Certainly whenever drinking is used as man's major release from boredom, it is unhealthy and destructive... There are kinds of anxieties that make drinking as escape a very dangerous thing. If a person becomes increasingly and deeply depressed or frightened by the disruptive revolutions and titanic evils of our age, he ought not to drink to find escape. He not only will be increasingly incapacitated to contribute to the solution of our problems, but he will find his sense of depression increased by alcohol – perhaps to the point that suicide will seem to be the only way out.¹⁵

Over time, the avoidance of reality causes people to grow an increasing inability to face reality and problem solve.

c) Biological and cultural bases of alcoholism: There is a growing body of scientific evidence that alcoholism has a genetic component, but the actual gene that may cause it has yet to be identified. "Alcohol consumption is influenced by a combination of environmental and genetic factors," said Gene Erwin, PhD, professor of pharmaceutical

¹⁴ Anne Harding "Alcohol and anxiety a risky mix for some" <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/HEALTH/08/01/alcohol.anxiety.risky.health/index.html> (accessed November 29, 2011).

¹⁵ Arnold B. Come, *Drinking: a Christian Position* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 58.

sciences at the CU School of Pharmacy.¹⁶ This study indicated that genetic factors play more of a role, and efforts are being made to understand the power of those genetic factors. If alcoholism can be traced to a particular gene or combination of genes, how can the information be used? "These genes are for risk, not for destiny," stressed Dr. Enoch Gordis, director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.¹⁷ He added that the research could help in identifying youngsters at risk of becoming alcoholics and could lead to early prevention efforts.

Further, in another article, Dr. Gordis commented, Progress has been made in understanding genetic vulnerability to alcoholism. We know, for instance, that more than one gene is likely to be responsible for this vulnerability. We now must determine what these genes are and whether they are specific for alcohol or define something more general, such as differences in temperament or personality that increase an individual's vulnerability to alcoholism. We must also determine how genes and the environment interact to influence vulnerability to alcoholism. Based on our current understanding, it is probable that environmental influences will be at least as important, and possibly more important, than genetic influences. Success in uncovering the genes involved in a vulnerability to alcoholism will help us to recognize the potential for alcoholism in high-risk individuals, to intervene at an early stage, and to develop new treatments for alcohol-related problems. This is a productive area of research that will continue to yield important answers to the basic questions of what causes alcoholism and how we can prevent and treat it.¹⁸

In Chad my country, there are some tribal groups such as Massa, Toupouri, Moussei, Sara-kaba, Gouleye, Mouroum, Kenga, Danguelat etc. that are known to drink more alcohol than others,¹⁹ but this tendency might be explained by cultural and environmental influences rather than biological or genetic factors. Generally, after harvest people in rural areas do not have much work to do, so they stay home most of time and

¹⁶ T. Buddy "Alcoholism - Is it Inherited? Genetic Component Not Yet Identified" <http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/genetics/a/aa990517.htm> (accessed March 23, 2012).

¹⁷ T. Buddy "Alcoholism - Is it Inherited? Genetic Component Not Yet Identified" <http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/genetics/a/aa990517.htm> (accessed March 23, 2012).

¹⁸ Enoch Gordis, M.D. "The Genetics of Alcoholism" <http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/alerts/1/blnaa18.htm> (accessed March 21, 2012).

¹⁹ Interview with Mangdah Gagué, a Chadian Medical Doctor on March 21, 2012.

enjoy drinking alcohol produced from cereals. Biological or genetic factors that might cause some tribal groups or individuals to be more susceptible to alcoholism than others are very important areas to explore. "Unfortunately, in Chad my country we do not have scientific means to do such research" said Dr. Mangdah.

d) Possible connection between brain structure and addiction: Based on a presentation given by Dr. Bankole A. Johnson, M.D, PhD at the 2003 Southeastern Conference on Drug and Alcohol Addiction, understanding what happens at the level of the brain and exploring and developing pharmacotherapy based on this understanding promise to assist alcohol abusers in their attempts to stop drinking and to diminish their craving for this drug and potential for relapse.²⁰ According to Dr. Bankole, four major issues have driven research efforts: (1) Up to 50% of alcohol-dependent patients relapse shortly after detoxification and/or non-pharmacologic treatment; (2) Knowledge has been gained in the past decade in the field of neurobiology with regard to complex and multifaceted neurotransmitter system within the brain that have been implicated in the desire for and addiction to alcohol; (3) Some individuals may possess a biologic predisposition to alcoholism based on abnormalities in brain chemistry that may be treatable via medication therapy; and (4) Programs that use psychosocial or behavioral models have raised questions about the potential for synergistic, additive, or even counteractive interactions with the pharmacologic dose of supposed therapeutic medications.

According to Dr. Ting-Kai Li quoted above, there appeared to be very large individual variations in how the brain responds to a given concentration of alcohol. Thus,

²⁰ Johnson A. Bankole MD, PhD, "The Biologic Basis of Alcohol Dependence" http://www.jhasim.com/files/articlefiles/pdf/ASIN_2_2_p48_53.pdf (accessed March 21, 2012).

he concluded, "Since we cannot easily study the function of the human brain in chemical terms, I needed to develop an animal model that would at least have some relevance to the human condition."²¹

2. Social Causes:

Their diversity demonstrates the reality of their action.

a) The influence of the family: in families where they drink a lot, even very young children are also asked to consume alcoholic beverages; the influence of example and the weight of habit do not disappear easily.

b) The influence of friends: Many young people begin to drink simply by imitation. Because friends do they do to conform to the pattern of youth, just as the Bible says, "bad company ruins good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33). In this bad company as a result of excessive ambitions, some drink to affirm their personality, some offer a drink to demonstrate their financial capability especially when they are in a group of boys and girls.

Related to the influence of friends we must also emphasize the search for the company. Ours is an age of mass society, social security, and instant communication, one world. At the same time, most people are overwhelmed by a feeling of loneliness and isolation. Therefore, they need human company and are seeking personal fellowship. They want to know and be known by others as unique individuals, whether ordinary or simple and brilliant and complicated. They want to be linked

²¹ "Genetic Influences on Alcohol Drinking and Alcoholism"
<http://www.indiana.edu/~rcapub/v17n3/p18.html> (accessed March 23, 2012).

together in mutual understanding and acceptance that breaks down the barriers created by moral judgments, the criteria of efficiency, and social norms.

This perversion of drinking for the purpose of fellowship takes many forms. For example, many people drink not because they like it or find it useful but because of social pressure. They are afraid of being seen as poor people or being excluded from the spirit of joy that fills the room. So against their taste, willingness, and perhaps their conscience, they drink anyway.

c) The influence of living conditions: lack of food due to poverty, misery and idleness (some people drink alcohol as food if they find it because they are hungry and have nothing to eat); the difficult conditions of work may be the cause of alcoholism. In forced labor or work performed in the heat, cold, fast-paced work or the chain, alcoholic beverages are consumed voluntarily to fight against thirst and fatigue. Ironically, alcohol causes dehydration, which increases the need and desire for a drink. Besides, overcrowded and poorly maintained apartments prompt many people to seek refuge in bars and cabarets that are "the living room of the poor."

d) The influence of the social environment: To be considered in the business world, one must be in the "circle of friends". And in that environment, can one refuse a drink and then a second, and the following? Shouldn't one buy drinks for others when one is rich? Can one go against prejudice? Isn't wine hygienic drink par excellence? Doesn't it make strong and virile? Isn't it good to have a home bar and learn to offer whiskey and cocktails? There are also customs and traditional practices, the holiday season, dowry ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, sacrifices and funerals are circumstances that lead people to alcoholism. The social pressure that often develops in relation to alcohol is a

phenomenon that has its roots in the fact that some people like to drink a lot (they drink again and again). If the taste of alcohol and drug effect did not exist, social pressure can never develop. For example people are never under social pressure when they sit around coffee, tea, or coke cola.

Related to social pressure, we can ask the question why some people have a strong desire to drink again and again, while others may stop at any time they want? Is it because those who drink again and again like the taste of alcohol so much better than most of people? This should not be the best answer because some severe alcoholics definitely do not like the taste of alcohol. Why does a drink call another? It seems that alcohol does things to some people it does not do to others. Some people drink for reasons that do not apply to others. Williams explains why some people drink over and over as follows,

Alcohol is a physiological agent and the urge which the initial drink produces, in my opinion, arises because of *deranged cellular metabolism*. Except for the fact that derangement is involved, the urge is fundamentally similar to the urge we have for water when our tissues become dehydrated, for salt when our tissues become salt-hungry, for food when our tissues are starving, for calcium when we are deficient in this element because of parathyroid malfunctioning. It is fundamentally like our urge to eat candy when we are candy-hungry (though much stronger) or the unfortunate craving some diabetics have for sugar or the ravenous hunger for yeast which a vitamin B – deficient animal exhibits.²²

Another reason why some people drink is that over time, their physiological urge to drink is disturbed. The "wisdom of the body" is altered, it turned into "foolishness of the body"; the requirements of the body are no longer a reliable guide, the more its requirements increase the worse its state worse. The physiological urge to drink, the foolishness of the body, is the easiest to produce in the most severe alcoholics, and the most difficult to produce in those for whom alcohol is not a

²² Williams, *Alcoholism the Nutritional Approach*, 16.

problem. This is the basis for all that one has the right to drink when one wants it, but not when one needs it. Those who have never had this specific desire for alcohol cannot understand the problem that an alcoholic has, as those who have never been morphine cannot understand the urge that drug addicts have. Of course, alcohol is a unique substance in that, unlike most drugs, it can serve as fuel for the body. It plays a dual role in its activity: it serves as a source of energy - like sugar - but at the same time it acts as a poison to disturb the mechanisms of appetite of the body. It destroys the appetite for food by encouraging a perverted physiological desire for alcohol.

e) The influence of the profession: There are businesses that encourage people to drink, those who make one thirsty (cookers, blacksmiths, forced laborers, etc.); those where there are contacts with the public (barmen, business, etc.). To the contrary, there are other businesses where people drink very little (professionals, teachers, clergy, etc.).

3. Economic Causes:

An over-production of alcoholic beverages and deceptive advertisements on alcohol consumption encourage people to drink cheaply and abundantly. As example, "studies suggest that an association exists between alcohol advertising and the onset or initiation of alcohol consumption among youth. Alcohol advertising shapes youths' attitudes, perceptions and particularly expectancies around alcohol use, which in turn, influence youth decisions to drink."²³ People who live on production and trade of various

²³ "Effects of Alcohol Advertising on Alcohol Consumption Among Youth"
http://www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/publications/Alcohol_Advertising_Literature_Review.pdf (accessed November 29, 2011).

alcoholic beverages play key role in this, a huge sector of agriculture, industry and commerce is also organized for the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Without these deceptive advertisements, economic interests are at risk.

In summary we can say that people can drink alcohol because they like the taste and the effects it produces, because of social pressure, or due to a physiological urge to drink. This physiological need that urges to drink is particularly important in the problem of alcoholism. However, it should be noted that the environment, even if it encourages people to make use of alcoholic beverages, still leaves those who are well informed free to consume alcohol or not. The environment really takes hold on people who are psychologically fragile, or unaware of the risks involved. This means that the lack of knowledge about the risks associated with the consumption of alcohol remains a leading cause of alcoholism.

After looking at causes of alcoholism, it is necessary to know its consequences as well because whatever cause is, alcoholism cannot be without consequence.

Effects of Alcohol

Many people enjoy a drink without any problems. But binge drinking or drinking heavily over longer periods of time can have very serious consequences. Alcohol misuse not only harms the individual but is damaging to family relationships and society in general in terms of violence and crime, accidents and drink driving.

1. Effects of Alcohol on the Body:

This includes physical effects as well as mental and emotional effects.

a) *Physical effects*: Binge drinking and prolonged heavy drinking over longer periods of time can affect the body in many ways.

- Brain damage: Binge drinking can cause blackouts, memory loss and anxiety. Long-term drinking can result in permanent brain damage, serious mental health problems and alcohol dependence or alcoholism. Young people's brains are particularly vulnerable because the brain is still developing during their teenage years. Alcohol can damage parts of the brain, affecting behavior and the ability to learn and remember. One very disabling type of brain damage due to heavy drinking (probably in combination with malnourishment) is when short-term memory fails. This means the individual may not be able to recall where he is, how he got there or what day it is.²⁴

Explaining the alcohol effects on the brain, Arnold Come writes,

Just what does alcohol do to the brain that makes it so detectable to almost two thirds of American adults? In contrast to Coke and coffee, and contrary to a general impression, alcohol is not a stimulant. It does not wake the brain up so that the senses become sharper and thinking becomes keener. What alcohol does is just the opposite. It is an anesthetic like chloroform. It depresses. This basic physiological impact must be clearly recognized. Only so can we understand the reasons for drinking and the problems that accompanying drinking.²⁵

Alcohol abuse also greatly increases the chance of stroke, which result from blood clots clogging arteries in the brain, or blood vessels bursting and leaking into the brain.²⁶

Moreover, drinking alcohol is the second biggest risk factor for cancers of the mouth and throat (smoking being the first). People who develop cirrhosis of the liver (often caused by too much alcohol) can develop liver cancer.²⁷

²⁴ "Know...the effects of alcohol" <http://www.knowyourlimits.info/TheEffectsOfAlcohol.aspx> (accessed July 30, 2011).

²⁵ Arnold B. Come, *Drinking: A Christian Position*, 4.

²⁶ "Long Term Effects of Alcohol" <http://www.alcoholism-solutions.com/long-term-effects-of-alcohol.html> (accessed July 30, 2011).

²⁷ "Know...the effects of alcohol" <http://www.knowyourlimits.info/TheEffectsOfAlcohol.aspx> (accessed July 30, 2011).

- Liver: One of the most well known long term effects of alcohol consumption is problems with the liver. The liver breaks down alcohol and uses it as fuel, but this process exhausts the liver, and too much alcohol too frequently can damage the liver permanently, leading to liver disease and cirrhosis or cancer of the liver.²⁸

There are two kinds of liver disease, acute (known as acute alcoholic hepatitis) and chronic, which reflect whether it develops over a matter of months or years respectively.

For *chronic liver* disease, there are four stages:

1) The commonest and mildest form of liver damage is a '*fatty liver*'. This can be identified by blood tests, and is reversible with abstinence from alcohol.

2) The next step cannot be identified by blood tests, but a liver biopsy will show inflammation in addition to the excess fat. This is called *steatohepatitis*. In severe cases, *jaundice* may develop. A diagnosis of *acute alcoholic hepatitis* can then be made (see below).

3) At the next stage, *fibrosis* (scar tissue) is present. Again, this cannot be detected by blood tests or routine scans.

4) *Cirrhosis* occurs when the fibrosis reaches the stage when the normally soft liver is divided into thousands of pea-sized pockets of liver tissue, wrapped in fibrosis. Once cirrhosis develops, the prognosis partly depends on whether or not one continues drinking. People with compensated cirrhosis – meaning they have no symptoms – and who then stop drinking, have an 80% chance of being alive after 10 years.

²⁸ "Know...the effects of alcohol" <http://www.knowyourlimits.info/TheEffectsOfAlcohol.aspx> (accessed July 30, 2011).

The majority of those with decompensated cirrhosis – displaying symptoms – will die within three years.

As for *Acute Liver* disease-known as *Acute Alcoholic Hepatitis*, it is caused by heavy drinking over a period of months. This is the pattern that is likely to occur when young people get liver disease, although older people who drink excessively later in life are also susceptible. It is potentially reversible with no long-term effects if you recover and stop drinking alcohol completely.

However, 70-90% of patients with acute alcoholic hepatitis – likely to be those who have been drinking for longer and therefore unlikely to be young people - will have cirrhosis. Jaundice is the usual first symptom. In hospitalized cases, there's a mortality rate of around 50% associated with acute alcoholic hepatitis. Liver transplants are usually not an option, partly because of the history of recent alcohol abuse.²⁹

- Heart: Alcohol can cause high blood pressure (hypertension) increasing the risk of having a heart attack or stroke. It also weakens heart muscles, which can affect lungs, liver, brain and other body systems and can cause heart failure. Binge drinking and drinking heavily over longer periods can cause the heart to beat irregularly (arrhythmia) and has been linked to cases of sudden death.

Heart disease is caused by a gradual build up of fatty deposits on the walls of coronary arteries, which deliver blood to the heart. This causes the artery to narrow, and makes it harder for it to supply heart muscle with blood and oxygen. To function normally, the muscle tissue that constitutes the bulk of the heart requires a constant supply of oxygen-containing blood. Blocking of the arteries leads to coronary heart

²⁹ "Alcohol and your liver" <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-your-liver?> (accessed July 30, 2011).

disease, which may result in angina (heart-related chest pain) and eventually to sudden death from a heart attack. Heart attacks, the most common serious manifestation of coronary heart disease, are generally triggered by a blood clot forming within a constricted coronary artery, obstructing blood flow and depriving a portion of the heart muscle of oxygen. As a result, the heart can't pump properly which can cause permanent disability or death, either immediately or through medical complications.³⁰

Drinking too much has the following effects on the heart:

- 'Holiday heart' syndrome. Binge drinking or a period of heavy alcohol consumption can cause a sudden, irregular rhythm of the heart in apparently healthy people. This results in shortness of breath, changes in blood pressure and an increase in the risk of a heart attack and even sudden death.
- An increased risk of thrombosis (blood clotting). Alcohol can affect levels of a substance in the blood called homocysteine. High homocysteine levels increase the risk of blood vessel blockages.
- Increased risk of high blood pressure (hypertension). According to the UK Department of Health, men who regularly consume more than eight alcohol units a day are four times more likely to develop high blood pressure. Women who regularly consume more than six alcohol units a day double their risk of developing high blood pressure. People who've had a heart attack may be at greater risk of developing high blood pressure or further damage to the heart muscle as a result of drinking alcohol.

³⁰ "Alcohol and heart disease" <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-heart-disease?> (accessed July 30, 2011).

- Regular heavy drinking may lead to enlargement of the heart. This is a sign that the heart is unable to pump effectively. This condition is known as heart failure, and requires treatment consisting of drugs, a pacemaker or even a heart transplant. The condition is not curable.³¹

- Lungs: People who drink a lot of alcohol have more lung infections and can be more likely to get pneumonia and for their lungs to collapse. When a person vomits as a result of drinking alcohol they may choke if vomit gets sucked into their lungs.

- Stomach: Drinking above recommended limits can lead to stomach ulcers, internal bleeding and cancer. Alcohol can cause the stomach to become inflamed (gastritis), which can prevent food from being absorbed and increase the risk of cancer.

- Pancreas: Heavy or prolonged use of alcohol can cause inflammation of the pancreas, which can be very painful, causing vomiting, fever and weight loss, and can be fatal. The pancreas is a gland that produces enzymes which help with digestion, and hormones, such as insulin and glucagon, which control blood sugar levels. One gets pancreatitis when his/her pancreas becomes inflamed, and its cells are damaged. There are two types of pancreatitis, acute and chronic. Both are often caused by heavy drinking.

Acute pancreatitis is most commonly caused by a bout of heavy drinking or by gallstones. The main symptom of acute pancreatitis is abdominal pain, felt just behind the ribs and spreading through to one's back. The pain, which usually comes on over about an hour, can be severe. Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting and fever. Most cases come on quickly and usually go away quickly, leaving no permanent damage.

³¹ "Alcohol and heart disease" <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-heart-disease?> (accessed July 30, 2011).

However, one in five cases is severe. Other organs can be damaged by pancreatic enzymes getting into the drinker's bloodstream during an attack. This can lead to serious illness, such as kidney or respiratory failure, and can be fatal. About 25% of people who develop severe acute pancreatitis die

Chronic pancreatitis is when one's pancreas is constantly inflamed. Heavy drinking, usually over a period of 10 years or more, is the cause of about eight out of 10 cases of chronic pancreatitis. However, the condition can also be hereditary. Men between the ages of 40 and 50 are most commonly affected.

The main symptom of chronic pancreatitis is also abdominal pain that is felt behind the ribs and goes all the way through to one's back. It is a recurrent pain, which can be mild initially, but can become severe for some people. Weight loss is common for people with chronic pancreatitis.³²

- Intestine: Heavy drinking may result in ulcers and cancer of the colon. It also affects the body's ability to absorb nutrients and vitamins.

- Kidneys: Heavy drinking can increase the drinker's risk of developing high blood pressure – a leading cause of chronic kidney disease.

- Bones: Alcohol interferes with the body's ability to absorb calcium. As a result, the drinker's bones become weak and thin (osteoporosis).

- Weight gain: Alcohol is high in calories. Weight for weight, the alcohol in a drink contains almost as many calories as fat. The average bottle of wine contains 600 calories while four pints of average strength lager contains 640.

³² "Alcohol and pancreatitis" <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-pancreatitis?> (accessed July 30, 2011).

- Skin: Alcohol dehydrates the drinker's body and skin; it also widens blood vessels causing his/her skin to look red or blotchy.

- Reproduction: Alcohol affects reproduction in both men and women in a number of ways.

Our reproductive systems are controlled by a variety of hormones, such as testosterone and estrogen. Alcohol disrupts the production of these hormones, which means the finely balanced system doesn't work properly. Alcohol's effects on other parts of the body, such as the liver, can make the problem worse.

In men, alcohol affects testosterone levels, and may lead to lowered sperm counts and impotence. Prolonged alcohol abuse in men can cause testosterone deficiency and shrinkage of the testicles (testicular atrophy). This can lead to impotence, sterility and 'feminisation' (a loss of male secondary sexual characteristics, with effects including breast enlargement, a loss of facial and body hair, and growth around the hips).

Testicular atrophy is common in alcoholics, affecting up to three out of four alcoholics with liver disease. Among alcoholics who have not yet developed liver damage, around half have reduced sperm counts or poor sperm quality.

In women, alcohol disrupts the menstrual cycle and can stop a woman from ovulating.

In the short term, drinking can lower the chances of conception. Long-term alcohol abuse has been linked to infertility and sexual dysfunction.

Chronic heavy drinking contributes to many female reproductive disorders. Women may have irregular periods or fail to ovulate. They may also find menstruation stops or they have an early menopause. Heavy drinkers who do become pregnant are

more likely to have a miscarriage. Heavy drinking in one's late teens and early twenties may affect fertility later in life. A recent study of more than 7,000 Australian identical twins showed that those who were alcohol dependent had children later than their twin sisters who did not drink heavily.

The Chief Medical Officer in UK advises that "Pregnant women or women trying to conceive should avoid drinking alcohol." Studies have shown that drinking even small amounts of alcohol can reduce a woman's likelihood of conceiving.³³

b) Mental and Emotional effects: The physical effects are not the only ones related to excessive alcohol drinking. There are mental and emotional problems that arise in long-term effects of alcohol that are just as damaging as the physical effects.

Alcohol is a depressant. And though drinkers may feel better about their problems while they're drinking, afterward they may find themselves feeling worse. With the depression come mood swings, inability to concentrate, personality changes, and even suicidal tendencies. People can also experience dementia, memory loss, blackouts, and hallucinations when they drink heavily.

Those who use alcohol to deal with their problems may also find themselves becoming more dependent on alcohol to avoid dealing with sources of stress, which can make these emotional and mental effects worse. In reality, they are avoiding the problem and therefore rarely are able to solve it.

Though many people don't think about it, a hangover isn't the only thing people may have to suffer through as alcohol abuse can lead to many serious conditions, even

³³ "Alcohol and reproduction" <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-reproduction?> (accessed July 30, 2011).

death.³⁴

People may think alcohol helps them to cope with difficult situations and emotions, to reduce stress or relieve anxiety, but alcohol is in fact associated with a range of mental health problems including depression, anxiety, risk-taking behavior, personality disorders and schizophrenia.

Alcohol has also been linked to suicide. In 2006, the London Mental Health Foundation reports that:

- 65% of suicides have been linked to excessive drinking;
- 70% of men who kill themselves have drunk alcohol before doing so;
- Almost one third of suicides among young people take place while the person is intoxicated.³⁵

Excessive drinking can disrupt normal sleeping patterns resulting in insomnia and a lack of restful sleep which can contribute to stress and anxiety.³⁶ Some people think they need a drink to fall asleep, but actually, once the alcohol metabolizes and turns to sugar, it causes wakefulness.

2. Effects of Alcohol on Family:

Alcohol misuse not only harms the individual but also is damaging to family relationships. This includes mostly violence, marital conflict and divorce, economic effects, shame, etc.

a) Violence in the family: Alcohol increases aggressive behavior in many people and plays a large part in family violence. Whether the violence is personal, such as

³⁴ "Long Term Effects of Alcohol" <http://www.alcoholism-solutions.com/long-term-effects-of-alcohol.html> (accessed July 30, 2011).

³⁵ <http://www.knowyourlimits.info/TheEffectsOfAlcohol.aspx> (accessed July 30, 2011).

³⁶ Know...the effects of alcohol, <http://www.knowyourlimits.info/TheEffectsOfAlcohol.aspx> (accessed July 30, 2011).

suicide, or interpersonal, such as domestic abuse, rape or homicide, it is a problem for many families. According to athealth.com, studies have shown that up to 42 percent of people involved in violent crimes and about 57 percent of men involved in domestic violence were under the influence of alcohol.³⁷

The family is a system, which means that violence in any part of the family equals violence in every part. Woman abuse is a primary indicator of child abuse and vice versa. This system of violence in the family is so exact that the family dog tied up in the yard and abused indicates that inside the house the family is being battered, too. Most people who work with children of alcoholics are well aware that these children often suffer from physical violence against them by a drunken parent. What they may not understand is that these children probably suffer more often because of abuse against their mothers, because woman abuse is even more common than child abuse. Many children of alcoholics have mothers who are abused and the mother's abuse affects the child in significant ways:

- Children who have witnessed abuse often suffer low self-esteem, depression, stress disorders, poor impulse control and feelings of powerlessness. They are at high risk for alcohol and drug use, sexual acting out, running away, isolation, fear, and suicide. .
- Children of battered women are fifteen times more likely to be battered than children whose mothers are not abused. A woman who is battered may turn to alcohol for relief from her pain and become alcoholic herself.

³⁷ "Negative Effects of Alcohol on the Family" http://www.ehow.com/list_7650434_negative-effects-alcohol-family.html (accessed July 30, 2011).

- The woman who becomes unable to cope as a result of the battering may develop an emotional or mental illness that leaves her unable to fulfill her parenting role.
- Because the abuser often uses the children's behavior as an excuse for battering the woman, children come to blame themselves for their mother's abuse.
- Children of battered women suffer "survivor guilt" because they must watch helplessly while their mother is beaten and can do nothing to save her.
- Since battered women are often raped (and, therefore, have little access to birth control), an alcoholic battered woman is at high risk for having a FAS/FAE child.

Violence is a learned behavior. Children who are raised in violent homes may learn to repeat the family patterns either by becoming abusers or battered themselves as adults. Boys who have witnessed abuse of their mothers are 10 times more likely to batter their female partners as adults. Schools and institutions suffer as children who witness violence at home often act out their rage and frustration in violent ways against other children, authority figures or even animals.³⁸

b) Marital Conflict and Divorce: Marriages that contain alcohol abuse have a divorce rate at least four times higher than those that do not. Marital conflicts involving alcohol not only include violence but also financial problems and sexual dysfunction. Although financial problems are the most common reasons for divorce, alcoholism is the second cause.³⁹

c) Economic effects: The economic effect of alcohol on families is severe. Most families suffer financially from the excessive amount of money used to purchase alcohol and an increase in medical and legal expenses, lower wages and lost employment. The

³⁸ Geri Redden, "Violence in the family" <http://www.nacoa.org/famviol.htm> (accessed July 30, 2011).

³⁹ "Negative Effects of Alcohol on the Family" http://www.ehow.com/list_7650434_negative-effects-alcohol-family.html (accessed August 1, 2011).

amount spent on alcohol and its effects might exceed a family's income, thus reducing the amount of resources available to run and support a family and household.

d) Shame: The emphasis of shame based families is projecting a healthy image to others even though the family is dysfunctional. What matters most to shame based families is not the healing of its hurting members, but that the family maintain its reputation at all costs.

Shame based families try hard to hide family problems such as addiction to pornography, alcohol or drugs, gambling, abortion, marital discord, adultery, outbursts of anger, sexual perversions, rebellious teens, etc. When a family member, perpetrator or victim of one of these problems seeks healing and shares it with others, some family members are usually angered. They are not angry because a family member is hurting. They are angry because the family "secret" has been exposed, and they are embarrassed.

Those embarrassed decide that the one who shared the "secret" is the family's greater problem and must be controlled. Shame is the method of control and is administered by some form of rejection such as condemnation and/or withdrawal. Consequently, the family member is not healed, the agonizing pain of dysfunctional family relationships increases, and a shamed based family is passed on to the next generation.⁴⁰

3. Effects of Alcohol on Society:

Alcohol effects on society include accidents, violence and economic effects.

⁴⁰ Greg Brezina, "Healing Shame Based Families"
http://www.cftministry.org/resources/articles/article_shame_based.html (accessed August 1, 2011).

a) Accidents: This includes traffic accidents, domestic accidents, fires, drawings, and workplace accidents.

People who have been drinking are more likely to take risks, further increasing the likelihood of accidents. Although drink driving figures have been falling steadily for decades, traffic accidents are still a leading cause of alcohol related deaths among young men aged 16-24.⁴¹

Four hundred and sixty deaths were caused by drivers over the legal alcohol limit in 2007 (incidentally, the lowest figure since records began). There were a further 1,760 serious casualties and 12,260 slight casualties. Further accidents are caused by drivers who have drunk alcohol but are not over the limit. Alcohol is a factor in one in five road deaths (figures include drunk pedestrians).⁴²

Accidents in the home are extremely common in the world and alcohol is the biggest single cause of accidents in the home. Every year, there are around 4,000 fatal domestic accidents, 2.6 million accidents that require treatment in A&E departments and millions more minor accidents. At a conservative estimate, there are 400 deaths in alcohol-related home accidents.⁴³

There is also a strong link between drinking alcohol and being injured in a fire. Around one in three fires are caused by people under the influence of alcohol. Of the 270 people who died in household fires in UK in 2007/08, around a third had been drinking.

⁴¹ http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-accidents?SQ_DESIGN_NAME=print_friendly (accessed August 1, 2011).

⁴² http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-accidents?SQ_DESIGN_NAME=print_friendly (accessed August 1, 2011).

⁴³ http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-accidents?SQ_DESIGN_NAME=print_friendly (accessed August 1, 2011).

Two-thirds of people who are admitted to hospital or die from burns have been drinking alcohol.⁴⁴

It may seem like a great idea to go for a swim when you've been drinking. After all, a nice cooling dip is a tempting prospect on a hot day or after a night out. But between a quarter and half of all adult drowning victims have alcohol in their bloodstream. Alcohol is present in around a third to two-thirds of people who drown in swimming and boating accidents. Alcohol is also a factor in around one in eight domestic drowning, with falling into a garden pond, slipping in the bath and falling asleep in the bath among the most common causes.

Moreover, alcohol is a factor in up to one in four workplace accidents. Heavy drinkers are two to three times more likely to be involved in industrial accidents than non-problem drinkers.⁴⁵

b) Violence: Alcohol is associated with violent crime at a greater than chance level and at a significantly higher level than it is associated with nonviolent crime. Heavy drinking and a verbal argument usually precede the violent act and the victim is as likely as the offender to initiate the altercation. However, it is the precipitator of the altercation who is more likely to be intoxicated. Alcohol and aggression are more strongly related than expected with violent offenders demonstrating psychopathology. Marital violence appears related to alcohol independent of other marital problems.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-accidents?SQ_DESIGN_NAME=print_friendly (accessed August 1, 2011).

⁴⁵ "Alcohol and accidents" <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/factsheets/alcohol-and-accidents?> (accessed August 1, 2011).

⁴⁶ "Alcohol and Crimes of Violence: Present Issues" <http://informahealthcare.com/doi/abs/10.3109/10826089009058873> (accessed August 1, 2011).

According to Van As, the head of the Trauma Unit at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital and President of Childsafe South Africa, trauma is the leading cause of admission to hospitals in all provinces and the leading cause of childhood deaths between the ages of one and 18 years. A South African multi-center study demonstrated that over half of all patients presenting to trauma units were victims of violence injuries. Across sites and for each respective year of the survey, between 35.8% and 78.9% of patients tested positive for alcohol.

According to Van As again, during his first address to Parliament in 1994, former President Mandela specifically singled out alcohol abuse as a major cause for crime, poverty, reduced productivity, unemployment, dysfunctional family life, political instability, the escalation of chronic diseases such as AIDS and TB, injury and premature death. The ill effects of alcohol abuse reach across social, racial, cultural, language, religious and gender barriers and affect all of us.⁴⁷

c) Economic effects: Examples in USA show that alcohol and drug abuse cost society an estimated \$86.1 billion from direct costs and losses in productivity related to crime, social welfare expenditures, motor vehicle crashes, and fire destruction. Drug abuse is estimated to have cost \$57.5 billion of these non-health-related costs, and alcohol abuse is estimated to have cost another \$28.7 billion.

The estimated economic costs of crime attributable to drug abuse in 1992 were \$18.4 billion. The costs attributable to alcohol abuse were \$6.4 billion.

Victims of crime often incur medical expenses and/or damaged property. In 1992, medical services cost an estimated \$400 million for injuries resulting from alcohol-

⁴⁷ "Alcohol and violence: a fatal combination" <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-07-29-alcohol-and-violence-a-fatal-combination/> (accessed August 1, 2011).

related crime and \$105 million from drug-related crime. Drug-related crimes cost about \$193 million in property damage; alcohol-related crimes cost about \$28 million in property damage.⁴⁸

4. Alcohol Statistics:

In addition to the effects of alcohol on individuals, family, and society we find important to overly express some relevant alcohol statistics and facts, and alcoholism statistics to help readers comprehend the destructive and pervasive effects of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Although many people drink alcohol without being involved in these destructive effects many others do. Therefore, facts and statistics are outlined below:

a) Statistics and facts in USA:

- Alcoholics spend four times the amount of time in a hospital as non-drinkers, mostly from drinking-related injuries.

- 65 people each day die on our highways due to alcohol.

- In 1988, 25,000 Americans were killed in auto accidents involving alcohol.

More than 500,000 were injured.

- Drunk drivers are responsible for 50% of highway fatalities.

- 95% of alcoholics die from their disease and die approximately 26 years earlier than their normal life expectancy.

- Alcohol is a factor in nearly half of America's murders, suicides and accidental deaths.

⁴⁸ "Drug / Alcohol Effects on Society" <http://www.saintmatthewschurches.com/AlcoholEffects.aspx> (accessed August 1, 2011).

- Twenty one percent of workers reported being injured or put in danger, having to re-do work or to cover for a co-worker or needing to work harder due to others' drinking.

- Up to 40% of industrial fatalities and 47% of injuries in the workplace are linked to alcohol consumption and alcoholism.

- Non-alcoholic members of alcoholic's families use 10 times as much sick leave as families where alcohol is not a problem. 80% of these family members report their ability to perform work is impaired as a result of living with an alcohol abuser.

- Absenteeism in the work place among alcoholics or problem drinkers is 3.8 to 8.3 times greater than normal.

- More than three fourths of female victims of nonfatal, domestic violence reported that their assailant had been drinking or using drugs.

- More than one third of pedestrians killed by automobiles were legally drunk.

- Research indicates that adolescents who abuse alcohol may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.⁴⁹

b) Statistics and facts in UK: The UK is one of the top ten in the world for alcohol consumption per head of population and alcohol abuse is clearly escalating. The Office for National Statistics reported in November 2006 that the alcohol related death rate in the UK doubled from 4,144 deaths in 1991 to 8,386 deaths in 2005.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ "Alcohol Statistics" http://www.alcohol-information.com/Alcohol_Statistics.html (accessed August 1, 2011).

⁵⁰ Alcohol Abuse Facts and Statistics <http://www.drug-aware.com/alcohol-abuse-facts-statistics.htm> (accessed March 23, 2012).

Alcohol misuse within the UK is highest in Scotland. Here are some examples of alcohol related harm in Scotland caused by factors other than an alcohol related disease as published by the Scottish Government:

- Nearly half of those who commit murder in Scotland - whose drink status is known - were drunk at the time of the offence.
- Alcohol is the greatest single contributory factor in deaths caused by house fire in Scotland.
- A third of adult pedestrians killed on the roads in Scotland had been drinking and one in six road accident deaths are due to drinking.
- Alcohol misuse costs Scotland's economy around £1.6 billion per annum along with tragic human costs including the fact that between 80 – 100,000 children are living in homes in Scotland where one or both parents suffer from an alcohol problem.⁵¹

Other alcohol related statistics in UK include:

- 1722 (17.6%) of the 10,555 persons arrested and brought to Charing Cross Police Station in 1994 were arrested for drunkenness offences .
- 45% of remand prisoners have a significant problem with alcohol, 20% of sentenced prisoners have a significant problem with alcohol, and approximately 7% are dependent on alcohol. 15% of female prisoners are problem drinkers.

⁵¹ Alcohol Abuse Facts and Statistics

<http://www.drug-aware.com/alcohol-abuse-facts-statistics.htm> (accessed March 23, 2012).

- In 40% of all violent incidents the victim described the assailant as being under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offence. This includes 44% of domestic violence and 17% of muggings.⁵²
- Alcohol use is associated with: 60-70% of homicides; 70% of stabbings; 70% of beatings; and 50% of fights or assaults in the home.
- One third of the victims of homicide are intoxicated at the time of death.
- In 41 % of contact crime, including assaults and muggings, the offender has been drinking.
- Around 13,000 violent incidents take place in or near licensed premises each week. A total of 125,000 facial injuries are sustained each year in violent circumstances, and in 61% of such cases either assailant or victim has been drinking.
- Screening of assault patients in accident and emergency departments has shown that between 65% and 80% were intoxicated at the time of the injury.⁵³

Before I end this chapter, I would like to briefly present the case of alcohol in Chad, my country. It was this situation that motivated me to write this thesis.

5. Problems Related to Alcohol: Case of Chad:

Where Chad is located, what does it look like and the alcohol case will be presented as follows:

⁵² "Alcohol and Crime Statistics" <http://www.lincs2alcohol.co.uk/alcohol-and-crime-statistics/index.html> (accessed August 1, 2011).

⁵³ "Alcohol and Crime Statistics" <http://www.lincs2alcohol.co.uk/alcohol-and-crime-statistics/index.html> (accessed August 1, 2011).

a) *Brief presentation*: Chad is a landlocked country located in the heart of Africa. It is surrounded by Soudan in the east; Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria in the west; Central Africa Republic in the south; and Libya in the north. The capital city is Ndjamena; the land area is 1,284,000 square kilometers. Official languages include French and Arabic. The literacy percentage is 53%; the vegetation is green in the south and desert in the north. The population is 10,700,000; the economy is based on agriculture, cattle, and oil exportation. Religions include 51% of Muslims, 35% of Christians, 23 % of Animists, and 7% of Other beliefs.⁵⁴

b) *The alcohol case in Chad*: Today, it was found that most Chadians,⁵⁵ especially in the southern part of the country are involved in the abuse of alcohol: old, adults and especially young adolescents.

Based on observation, the phenomenon of alcoholism is too fast among women and especially among young adolescent boys and girls especially towards the end of the year; in cities and in rural areas, the phenomenon is growing. The black market is flooded with all types of alcoholic beverages illegally imported of unknown quality (chemical components that create dependency).⁵⁶

According to the 2002 survey by the Ministry of Public Health in the cities of N'Djamena, Moundou, Sarh and Abeche, on the behavioral analysis of the situation of high school students with alcohol, the prevalence rates of alcoholism are estimated at 37% in schools and 54% in the home. School violence, traffic accidents, the spread of HIV / AIDS among young people are all revealing signs of this

⁵⁴ <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/cd-chad> (accessed March 25, 2012).

⁵⁵ The lack of official statistics on alcohol in Chad does not allow me to give a specific percentage here.

⁵⁶ Problems related to alcohol. Case of Chad, paper presented by Mr. Donbas Ngarnguenon Gode, a sociologist at a capacity building workshop on developing a national policy of alcohol in N'Djamena from 11 to 13 October 2010.

plague that must call out to everybody.⁵⁷

In recent years, youth alcoholism is an alarming proportion. With the only purpose of lighting up, young people engage in alcohol considering it as their favorite food thereby ignoring the negative effects of alcohol on the body.

The alcohol industry in Chad is one of the most stable industries regardless of economic conditions. In cities and in rural areas, bars abound. Alcohol consumption is considered a favorite pastime for adults and especially young people. Considering the increasing demand for alcoholic beverages, it can be safe to assume that these prevalence rates are also increasing.⁵⁸

Unfortunately, the specific actions of awareness and prevention conducted by the government and associations that fight against alcoholism, including Blue Cross of Chad are far from reducing the prevalence rate. The lack of a legislation outlawing alcoholism and also a lack of strategy against alcoholism in Chad is a serious handicap in the fight against this plague.⁵⁹

As facts, some estimate the annual production of millet beer to almost 300 million liters (this represents an average of about 75 liters per year and per inhabitant). Others believe that almost half of the production of millet in the south is used to make millet beer.

In 1974, 213,600 bottles of whiskey (and gin) were declared to customs, as well as 570,000 liters of wine (and 23,500 bottles of champagne), that these drinks are

⁵⁷ Report done by the Ad-Hoc Committee made of Chadian Ministry of Public Health and Blue Cross in Chad, March 2002.

⁵⁸ The amount of alcohol both produced in Chad and imported is increasing due to the demand for alcoholic beverages. One cannot say with precision which one is higher than the other.

⁵⁹ Jean Doulgue, "L'alcool passionne les jeunes au Tchad, On ne fait rien" / Alcohol passionate young people in Chad, nothing is done [My translation], <http://www.move4chad.org/article-l-alcool-passionne-les-jeunes-au-tchad-on-ne-fait-rien-60542831.html> (accessed July 9, 2011).

consumed by only 1% of the population. Gala, the national beer is produced by a successful company 100% foreign (shareholders: UNILEVER, SCOA, CFAO, and Heineken). Annual production of "Brasseries du Logone" in 10 years rose from 3 million (1965) to 14 million liters (1975), with an increase of 15% per year. This company, on a turnover of 2 billion 200 million a year pays the Chadian treasury about \$ 600USD million in taxes.⁶⁰ According to data from the Direction of Customs and direct Rights, in 1974 were imported 47,500 liters of beer, 58,700 bottles of wine and 528,000 liters in damjeanne, 23,000 bottles of champagne, 216,000 bottles of Gin and whiskey, and 3100 bottle 3100 of rum. Current imports are however lower than that of 1967 when Chad has imported 4.1 million tons of beer and whiskey valued at 371 million CFA, the equivalence of \$742,000USD. The main reason for this decline is due to the implementation of "Brasseries du Logone," the main beer factory in Chad, which covers almost all the needs of Chadians in beer. Advertisement of the national beer shows "Gala, premium beer", "Gala, the taste of happiness." The sign advertising is everywhere in Chad, even in some remote villages in the bush. "Gala" is one of the few things that Chadians appear to agree on. The Chadian says without hesitation that his beer is the best. He is so proud that he honored it every day by consuming it in large quantities. The "Brasseries du Logone" who knew how to exploit this falsely nationalist sentiment are securely rooted. They are undoubtedly one of the companies that work the best in Chad.⁶¹

It is almost impossible to enumerate the various alcoholic beverages. They are so disparate and forms so varied that they are beyond the control. With fanciful names, they

⁶⁰ Tchad et Culture/Chad and Culture (No. 97 December, 1976) p.19.

⁶¹ Tchad et Culture (N ° 98 January, 1977) p.20.

are made by women who are inspired by ancient practices. In Ndjamená where this trade is the fastest growing, two types are particularly appreciated:

- The "bili-bili", which is the grain alcohol taken from sorghum, is consumed in enormous proportions in the south. One of the marketing managers of Brasseries du Logone estimates the amount of "bili-bili" made each year to 3 million hectoliters;
- "The argui" the "Chadian whiskey" is a distilled beverage that contains a very high percentage of alcohol. It takes every day an alarming extent of control. Those who consume "argui" regularly become "wreck" after two or three years of consumption.

Raw materials typically used in the manufacture of native alcoholic beverages are millet and cassava, but other products such as dates involved. It is difficult to estimate the proportion of millet devoted to alcoholic beverages, but it is likely up to half the agricultural production, due to the regularity and the importance they take.⁶²

According to a survey by a youth organization in the city of Doba, where oil is located, consumers spend in selling places of traditional drinks (bili-bili, gilt, kal, Djalle, etc..) and those of hygienic beverages between three and five million CFA francs (about \$10,000 per day, corresponding to more than 500 sacks of millet). This leaves the population with a very small supply of food when they face famine.

This increasing way of alcohol business is accompanied by very negative consequences. Men and women leave their homes, preferring to live with the companions of alcohol; families are divided, the girls are abused and raped, parental authority is shattered. Gradually, the misery has settled in many homes. Given the relatively high incomes that accrue to women in the preparation of alcoholic beverages, many of them come to challenge the authority of their husbands. They see

⁶² Tchad et Culture (N ° 99 February, 1977) p.10.

them as rascals, spending their time sleeping under the mango trees to wait for their wives to bring them food. And often, customers are becoming new partners, donors to fund this activity. These new partners are among the workers of oil companies. They are quick to proclaim to anyone who wants to hear that they are "ready to pay, it's not the money that lacks." Thus, in justice, there is no day without a case of adultery or rape being treated, says the public prosecutor.⁶³

That non-Christians drink too much alcohol is not surprising. Unfortunately some Christians also drink too much and this is what causes problem.

6. A First Look at Alcohol Consumption by Chadian Christians:

In March and April 2011, I did a survey based on a questionnaire to figure out whether alcoholism is a real problem in the Chadian Church or not. Of 80 people (pastors, lay Christians, seminary students, representatives of Christian organizations etc.) that I have contacted 100% have agreed that alcoholism is a real problem in the Chadian Church.⁶⁴ I must clarify that there are two major groups in the Church in Chad, Catholics and Protestants. Although I will mention Catholics from time to time, my focus will be on the Protestant Church which is composed of so-called evangelical churches and Pentecostals. This is simply to narrow down the width of this work even though the project itself will be useful to many beyond the Protestant Church.

The Gospel has reached Chad in 1920; this means that the Church in Chad is still young. However, there is a big difference between the Church of yesterday and the Church of today. At the beginning of its expansion, while the Catholic Church is tolerant

⁶³ Tchad et Culture (No. 219 July / August, 2003) p. 24.

⁶⁴ Cf. the survey in Appendix A.

about alcohol, the Protestant Church in Chad has almost a unanimous point of view toward it. It is forbidden for Protestants Christians to drink alcohol. If a Protestant Christian drank wine, beer or other alcoholic beverages, they said he has sinned and that he or she was put under Church discipline. This difference of attitude toward the consumption of alcohol between Catholics and Protestants in Chad depends on who has brought the gospel in Chad. According to Rev. Rene Daidanso,⁶⁵ French missionaries who evangelized Chad were Catholics and tolerant toward alcohol consumption. Therefore, they allowed the first Catholic Christians to drink alcohol. To the contrary, protestant missionaries who evangelized Chad were all Anglophone from Norway, Australia, and New Zealand etc. They were all abstinent. Therefore, they forbade any form of the alcohol consumption. This is why catholic Christians drink alcohol but until late 1970 protestant Christians in Chad were still abstinent in their majority.

7. The Situation Today:

Today, the situation has changed for three reasons: the influence of foreigners, the oil boom and economic growth, and the lack of teaching on the sinfulness of getting drunk.

a) The influence of foreigners: Chadians who came from foreign countries after years of studies or business brought the idea of Christian freedom that allows any Christian to drink alcohol. Therefore, by imitation some Christians consume alcoholic beverages in public or in secret and Church leaders say nothing. This offends the faith of those who do not drink alcohol because they think it is sin to do so. In addition, not only

⁶⁵ Rev. Rene Daidanso is President of the Plymouth Brethren Church in Chad (the Darbists) known as Assemblies Chretiennes au Tchad. He was trained in the French Seminary Vaux-sur-Seine where he wrote his Master thesis on *The History of Missions in Chad*.

church leaders are silent against this change, but also some of them are counted among alcohol drinkers or alcohol sellers especially some Christian women who begin to sell alcohol as their business and this offends more sober Christians. Therefore, many Christians continue to ask questions such as, Is it sin or not to drink alcohol? Is it permissible or not for a Christian to drink alcohol in moderation?

The situation becomes complicated because Christians who drink say that the Bible does not prohibit alcohol, but it is church leaders in Chad who exaggerate with their laws. They also say that in other countries, Christians including pastors, elders and deacons drink alcohol, but it is only in Chad that the Church exaggerates. Those who consume alcohol often recall that Apostle Paul told Timothy not to continue to drink only water, but to use a little wine because of his stomach and his frequent illnesses (1 Timothy 5:23). They also say to anyone who will listen that Jesus Christ himself turned water into wine, so it is normal for Christians to drink alcohol. This way of quoting the Bible causes many Christians and especially young people to begin drinking alcohol.

b) The oil boom and economic growth: Unfortunately, the oil era in which Chad has entered in 2003 aggravated the situation. Those who work with oil companies receive large amount of salaries and start drinking without restraint and become alcohol addicted later. As anyone knows, the negative consequences of this pleasure in alcohol are severe. Besides physical, social, psychological and spiritual consequences of alcohol on them, they become less and less involved in church and even refrain from it. When one tries to help them give up alcohol and return to Church, they often quote the Bible, "The spirit is willing but the body is weak" (Matthew 26:41). Therefore, the more the number of these hesitating Christians increases, the more the Church decreases quantitatively and

qualitatively.

c) The lack of teaching on the sinfulness of getting drunk: The difficulty is not only on the side of Christians who consume alcohol; it is also on the side of church leaders who must deal with this situation. Teaching at the beginning when the gospel arrived in Chad was that the consumption of alcohol was sin. However, by carefully reading the word of God and other books about alcohol, listening to discussions held with other "men of God" about alcohol, most of today's church leaders have tendency to tolerate the consumption of alcohol and even to not speak about it especially when used with moderation. They hesitate to criticize or put under discipline a Christian who drinks alcohol, especially if done with moderation. Moreover, in this age of freedom where no one wants to offend anyone's mind, even a clear biblical teaching about alcohol is almost avoided in Church.

To help understand this issue, it is necessary to look closely in the next chapter at the biblical teaching about alcohol consumption that is the theological framework.

CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to try to answer two major questions. The first one is what does the Bible say about drinking alcoholic beverages? The second question is what does the Bible say about recovery from life controlling sins? Here I will argue for how progressive sanctification is the way for the Christian to embrace recovery from alcohol abuse, dependency, and addiction.

What Does the Bible Say About Drinking Alcoholic Beverages?

Among Christians the issue of alcohol consumption is difficult and often serious, it opposes two positions. For some, alcohol is bad; it is useless, therefore all Christians should refrain from drinking it at all times. For others, moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages is permissible and the Bible does condemn only its excess that is drunkenness. However, both positions agree on one point that is alcohol abuse is condemned by the word of God (Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21).

In fact, what does the word of God say about the consumption of alcoholic beverages? In the Bible it is often question of Vine and Wine. Therefore, we will first introduce the terms used in the Bible about wine, and then we will look at the verses that speak positively of wine and those that speak negatively of it. This will allow us to draw our conclusion as to whether it is permissible for a Christian to consume alcohol or not.

1. Different Terms for Wine in the Bible:

The word *wine* appears over 200 times in well known English Bible versions.¹ These are translations of different terms used in Hebrew for the Old Testament and in Greek for the New Testament.

*a) In the Old Testament*²

1. *Yayin* (יַיִן). This is the usual word for the fermented juice of the grape and is generally rendered "wine" in RSV and KJV. It is used 141 times in the OT. Its Greek equivalent is *oinos* (οἶνος). (Genesis 9:21-24; 19:32-35; Leviticus 10:9; Luke 7:33; Romans 14:21; Ephesians 5:18).
2. *Tirosh* (תִּירוֹשׁ). The usual translation of this word is "wine," but RSV and KJV occasionally render it "new wine," which is its actual meaning. It was a specific reference to comparatively fresh grape juice which was not fully aged. References to *tirosh* indicate that when incontinently used it was intoxicating. Hosea 4:11 says that both "*yayin* and *tirosh* take away the understanding" (cf. Judges 9:13; Acts 2:13). But how can non-intoxicating wine such as *tirosh* be intoxicating when incontinently used? The answer to this question is twofold. First, *tirosh* itself is wine not yet fermented;³ which means it could be fermented. Second, as suggested in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, in some cases *tirosh* has reference to fresh grape juice, before and during fermentation. The word is also used of the juice while still in the grape as "the new wine is found in the cluster" (Isaiah 65:8). However, in some passages it

¹ Using BibleWorks 5 software search, it shows that the word *wine* appears 231 times in King James Version (KJV); 220 times in American Standard Version (ASV); 235 times in New King James Version (NKJ); 237 times in English Standard Version (ESV); 260 times in New American Standard (NAS); 289 times in Revised Standard Version (RSV); 298 times in New Revised Standard Version (NRS); etc.

² Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 935. Cf. Everett F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 553.

³ N. Sender & I. Trenel, *Dictionnaire Hébreu-Français* (Genève, Switzerland: Slatkine, 1982), 784.

clearly denotes the fermented juice of the grape (Hosea 4:11), where it has intoxicating properties.⁴ The Septuagint (LXX) that is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament renders the word *tirosh* by *oinos*.

3. *Shekar* (שֵׁכָר). This word usually translated "strong drink," is from a root that means "to be or become drunk." This word is used to denote any intoxicating drink made from any fruit or grain, and in the early period included wine (Numbers 28:7; cf. 28:14). In Isaiah 5:11 *shekar* is used in parallel with *yayin* in referring to intoxicating beverages in general. The term *shekar* eventually became restricted to intoxicants other than wine from grapes. Both *shekar* and *yayin* were *forbidden* for priests and Nazirites (Leviticus 10:9; Numbers 6:3; cf. Judges 13:4, 7, 14; Luke 1:15). In Proverbs 20:1 "wine (*yayin*) is a mocker, strong drink (*shakar*) a brawler" (cf. Proverbs 31:4, 6). When Eli accuses Hannah of being intoxicated she responds, "I have drunk neither wine (*yayin*) nor strong drink (*shakar*)" (1Samuel 1:15).

4. Besides these three key words the Old Testament uses a few other words for wine, such as *hemer* (חֵמֶר) derived from the root "to ferment." It is a poetic term for wine in the Hebrew text. (Deuteronomy 32:14). Also *äsis* (עֲסִיס) a poetic synonym for *tirosh*, but is derived from the root "to crush, to press." Like *tirosh* it was intoxicating as in Isaiah 49:26 where the prophet says the oppressors of Israel "shall be drunk with their own blood as with *äsis*." There was also *yayin ha-rekah* (יַיִן הַרְקָה) "spiced wine" (Song of Solomon 8:2). This represented a variety of wines referred to as mixed or mingled wine. They were prepared with different kinds of herbs after the

⁴ Everett F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, 553.

manner of the non-Israelite peoples of the Near East and were much more intoxicating than the regular wine. This fact made it popular at banquets and festive occasions (Proverbs 9:2, 5). The biblical injunctions against its use are clear (Proverbs 23:29, 30). When wine was mixed with myrrh, it was used as a drug for its anesthetic and stupefying effects. It was this that was offered to Jesus at the time of His crucifixion (Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23).

b) In the New Testament⁵

1. *Oinos* (οἶνος) translated "wine," normally the fermented juice of the grape, the word for 'must', or unfermented grape juice is *trux* (τρουξ) translated "new wine", "sweet wine."⁶
2. *Oxos* (ὄξος) "*Sour wine, wine vinegar*"; it relieved thirst more effectively than water and, because it was cheaper than regular wine, it was a favorite beverage of the lower ranks of society and of those in moderate circumstances, especially soldiers. Given to Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36).⁷
3. *Sikera* (σίκερα) "*Strong drink*" which probably could include wine (Luke 1:15 cf. Numbers 28:7), but as a rule was differentiated from wine and mentioned with it οἶνος και σίκερα.⁸
4. *Gleukos* (γλεῦκος) "*sweet new wine*" (Acts 2:13).⁹

⁵ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (London: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., 1979), 562.

⁶ A. Bailly, *Dictionnaire Grec Français*, ed. L. Séchan et P. Chantaine (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1950), 1970.

⁷ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 574.

⁸ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 750.

⁹ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 162.

Although different words in Hebrew and Greek are translated "wine" in English, their close examination clearly shows at least two kinds of wine in the Bible, intoxicating wines that are *yayin*, *shekar*, *hemer*, *oinos*, and *sikera* and non-intoxicating wines that are *tiros*, *asis*, *oxos*, and *gleukos*. It is also mentioned above that non-intoxicating wine such as *tiros* when incontinently used was intoxicating. Hosea 4:11 says that both "*yayin* and *tiros* take away understanding." About *asis*, Isaiah says the oppressors of Israel "shall be drunk with their own blood as with *asis* (Isaiah 49:26). From the examination of these different words we can infer that in Bible wine had various levels of fermentation or alcohol content: *new wine* or fresh grape juice in many instances (Deuteronomy 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; Matthew 9:17); *wine* that is fermented grape juice; and *strong drink* that is hard liquor.

In this thesis I choose to deal with intoxicating wine or alcoholic beverages. There is no confusion about fresh grape juice or non-alcoholic beverages.

2. Positive References to Wine in the Bible:

Several verses in the Bible show that among men and women of God in the Old Testament the moderate consumption of wine was accepted as part of their daily life (Genesis 27:25-37; Deuteronomy 14:22-26; 2 Samuel 16:1-2; 2 Chronicles 2:10; Nehemiah 5:18; Job 1:13, 18). We will explore this through positive references to the word *yayin* the most used in the Old Testament and through the word *oinos* the most used in the New Testament to designate the fermented juice of the grape that is intoxicating as we mentioned above. From our exploration, we will see that there are at least four

positive ways to use drink wine. There might be a moral consideration that binds them together making it not just positive but also responsible.

a) *Wine as a tithe*: In Genesis 14:18 Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High brought out bread and wine (*yayin*) to Abram. He blessed Abram and God, and Abram gave him one tenth of everything.

b) *Wine as refreshment*: In 2 Samuel 16:1-2 Ziba brought wine (*yayin*) to king David to refresh those who become exhausted in the desert.

c) *Wine to improve a sad mood*: In Psalms 104:14-15 the psalmist praises God for the blessings of "wine (*yayin*) to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart."

d) *Wine to help digestion*: In Isaiah 25: 6 God will soon prepare a feast for His people that includes WINES, probably as wine actually helps digestion of large quantities of food, "On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines" (NIV).

e) *Other positive references to the use of wine*: In Genesis 27:25-37 Jacob brought food and bread to Isaac, his father and he ate; and he brought him wine (*yayin*), and he drank; and Isaac blessed Jacob, his son. The children of Israel were instructed to pour out a drink offering of strong drink (*shekar*) to the LORD in the sanctuary (Numbers 28:7). In Deuteronomy 14:22-26 and particularly the verse 26, the law allows the use of wine (*yayin*) and strong drink (*shekar*). When David was a young man his father Jesse sent him with bread and wine (*yayin*) to the king Saul (1 Samuel 16:20); In the house of the Lord there were Levites appointed over the wine (*yayin*) supply (1 Chronicles 9:29); When Israel crowned David king in Hebron they drank wine (*yayin*) in abundance (1 Chronicles

12:39-40). 2 Chronicles 2:10 shows that there was enough wine (*yayin*) in Israel in the days of king Solomon so he was able to export 20,000 baths of it, which correspond to 116,000 gallons (a bath was about 5.8 gallons).¹⁰ Nehemiah, as governor of Israel had wine (*yayin*) in abundance at his table (Nehemiah 5:18); Esther served wine (*yayin*) to the king, her husband (Esther 5:6); Job's children drank wine (*yayin*) (Job 1:13, 18); In Proverbs 9:5 Wisdom's invitation to her banquet included eating of the bread and drinking of the wine (*yayin*) she had mixed. In Proverbs 31:6-7 wine (*yayin*) was given to those who are in anguish to drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. King Solomon said he had searched with his mind how to cheer his body with wine (*yayin*)... until he might see what was good for mortals to do under heaven during the few days of their life (Ecclesiastes 2:3). Then in Ecclesiastes 9:7 he says "Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine (*yayin*) with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do." The beloved served wine (*yayin*) to her beloved in the Song of Solomon 8:2; In prediction to the Gospel of the kingdom of God, Isaiah invites everyone who thirsts, to come to the waters; and everyone who has no money to buy wine (*yayin*) and milk without money and without price (Isaiah 55:1). Moreover, among the promises of restoration of Israel, Amos 9:14 says that the children of Israel shall plant vineyards and drink wine (*yayin*).

In each of the verses quoted above, it is the term "*yayin*" that is used, and at no place in these passages are these actions or behaviors criticized, even Solomon who said he had delivered his body to the wine (Ecclesiastes 2: 3) was not directly criticized for that although he was criticized for foreign women who led him to sin (1 Kings 11: 1-13; Nehemiah. 13: 26).

¹⁰ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 651.

In the New Testament wine is not mentioned very often, the most common Greek word designating wine is *oinos*, the equivalence of the Hebrew word *yayin*. There are at least two positive ways to use wine:

a) *Medical use of wine*: This includes its beneficial effect on wounds. In Luke 10:34, the Good Samaritan went to the half dead man, "bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine (*oinos*) on them (Luke 10:34). Also, Paul recommended Timothy to no longer drink only water, but to take a little wine (*oinos*) for the sake of his stomach and his frequent illnesses (1 Timothy 5:23).

Commenting the curative value of wine, as implied in Luke 10:34 and 1 Timothy 5:23, Dr. Salvatore P. Lucia in his book *Wine as Food and Medicine*; pp 5, 58 wrote, "Wine is the most ancient dietary beverage and the most important medicinal agent in continuous use throughout the history of mankind . . . Actually, few other substances available to man have been as widely recommended for their curative powers as have wines"¹¹

b) *Domestic use of wine*: Wine was offered to guests. At a wedding in Cana when the wine gave out, Jesus positively responded to Mary's request and changed water into wine (*oinos*) to meet the need of so many guests at the event (John 2:3, 9).

In summary we saw that both in Old Testament and New Testament fermented wine was used by men and women of God probably in a good way as they drank it with joy in their homes and especially during their feasts, as they offered it to their guests and even as drink offering to the Lord. Abundance of wine was viewed as sign of blessings

¹¹ Dr. Salvatore quoted by Norman Rowe in his article "Does the Bible permit drinking ANY wine or alcohol?" <http://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/does-bible-permit-drinking-wine-alcohol.html> (Accessed August 16, 2011).

from the Lord and its lack as sign of calamity. Besides its use for nourishment we saw too that fermented wine was used for medical purpose to bring happiness to those who have bitterness in their heart, for its beneficial effect on wounds, on fatigue, and on illnesses.

How can it be that the Bible speaks of the consumption of fermented wine in a positive way? Can one infer from this that the Bible recommends today's Christians to go and drink alcoholic beverages as they want? Of course not as they want, but for the reasons implied in the text we can deduce that in some instances there is indeed a positive consumption of wine. However, we cannot draw a balanced conclusion only based upon positive references to wine in the Bible. It is necessary to look at negative references to wine as well.

3. Negative References to Wine in the Bible:

There are many negative references to wine in the Bible especially verses that condemn the use of it to the point of drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21), and verses that prohibit wine to specific groups of people and at a specific time. As examples, the priests were forbidden to drink wine when ministering in the tabernacle (Leviticus 10:9). Wine was likewise forbidden to the Nazirite during the time of his separation (Numbers 6:3, 20). Kings were to avoid wine; it so as to govern with a clear head (Proverbs 31:4-5). The Rechabites refused to drink wine because a notable ancestor had commended them not to do so (Jeremiah 35:6-7). "But his purpose was apparently to have them retain their simple nomadic life rather than settling down to the dangerous luxuries of civilization."¹² Elders must not be given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3); and deacons not given to much wine (1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3).

¹² *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, and John Rea (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 1812.

Moreover, excessive wine drinking leads to negative outcomes such as sexual immorality and incest (Genesis 19:32-35; Hosea 4:18), poverty (Proverbs 21:17; 23:21), strife, (Proverbs 23:29-30), woe and sorrow (Proverbs 23:29-30), error, (Isaiah 28:7), contempt of God's works (Isaiah 5:12), scorning (Hosea 7:5), and rioting and wantonness (Romans 13:13).

In Genesis 9:21-24 Noah drank of the wine (*yayin*) and became drunk, and he lay uncovered in his tent. This is the first mention of *yayin* in the Bible and clearly shows that drunkenness leads to trouble.

In Genesis 19:30-38, the two daughters of Lot, seeing there was no man in the country to come in to them after the manner of all countries have agreed to make their father drink wine (*yayin*) in order to have sex with him and keep his race. Probably, they knew that if their father was lucid he would not accept their offer. With wine, they succeeded their plan without their father noticing and they became pregnant by their father.

In Leviticus 10:8-10 a directive is given to Aaron and his descendants (the Levites) not to consume wine (*yayin*) or strong drink (*shekar*) before ministering at the tabernacle, that they may not die; it may be inferred that this is what caused the error of Nadab and Abihu which resulted in their destruction (Leviticus 10:1-2). This is a statute forever throughout their generations. This is a prohibition on a specific group for a specific purpose of ministering in the tabernacle and later in the temple which symbolize God's presence among his people. We can deduce from this prohibition that for some instances some people are never to drink intoxicating beverages.

In Numbers 6:3-20 Nazirites during the time of their consecration shall separate themselves from wine (*yayin*) and strong drink (*shekar*); they shall drink no wine vinegar or other vinegar, and shall not drink any grape juice or eat grapes, fresh or dried. Then the priest shall elevate them as an elevation offering before the LORD. After that the Nazirites may drink wine (*yayin*). This is a prohibition on a specific group at a specific time for a specific purpose of separating themselves or being holy to the Lord as part of their vow process.

In Judges 13:4, 7 both wine (*yayin*) and strong drink (*shekar*) are referred to as prohibited to Samson and his mother as part of the Nazirite vow process.

Several verses of Proverbs refer to wine (*yayin*) and strong drink (*shekar*) and describe their consequences. Proverbs 20:1 says that "wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." Proverbs 21:17 says, "He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine (*yayin*) and oil will never be rich. Proverbs 23:20-21 says, "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags." Proverbs 23:29-32 describe furthermore the sad condition of those who indulge to excess of wine: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has Complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper." In Proverbs 31:4-5 kings and rulers were warned against using wine (*yayin*) and strong drink (*shekar*), in order that their faculties not be dulled when performing their duties, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or

for rulers to desire strong drink; lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted."

Isaiah speaks several times of those who have been overcome with wine and strong drink, thus condemning strong focus on drink. Isaiah 5:11-12 says, "Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks (*shekar*), who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine (*yayin*). They have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of his hands." Isaiah 5:22 says, "Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine (*yayin*) and champions at mixing drinks (*shekar*)."
Isaiah 28:1, 7 says, "Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of the rich valley of those overcome with wine (*yayin*)! These also reel with wine (*yayin*) and stagger with strong drink (*shekar*); the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink (*shekar*), they are confused with wine (*yayin*), they stagger with strong drink (*shekar*); they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgment."

Jeremiah also warns against intoxication of wine. Jeremiah 23:9 says, "Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me, all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine (*yayin*), because of the LORD and because of his holy words."

Ezekiel mentions *yayin* as prohibited to priests at specific time and place, "No priest shall drink wine (*yayin*) when he enters the inner court" (Ezekiel 44:21).

Hosea says that "Wine (*yayin*) and new wine (*tirosh*) take away the understanding (Hosea 4:11). Reference to *tirosh* here indicates that when incontinently used it was intoxicating.

In the New Testament wine and strong drink (*sikera*) are prohibited to John the Baptist in regard to his subjection to a Nazirite vow, "for he (John the Baptist) will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine (*oinos*) or strong drink (*sikera*); even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:15). This is probably because John the Baptist has a special call on his life and it is so that he never can be accused of drunkenness when he is speaking as a prophet.

In Romans 14:21 Paul the apostle recommends not to eat meat drink wine in front of those who find it offensive, "it is right not to eat meat or drink wine (*oinos*) or do anything that makes your brother stumble."

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul clearly admonishes drunkenness, "Do not get drunk with wine (*oinos*), for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,"

In his pastoral epistles, Paul warns deacons, bishops, and older women against drunkenness but not against drinking wine altogether. In 1 Timothy 3:8 he says, "Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, *not addicted to much wine*, not greedy for gain;" In Titus 1:7 he says, "For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or *a drunkard* or violent or greedy for gain," and in Titus 2:3 he says, "Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or *slaves to drink*; they are to teach what is good."

In summary, negative references to wine in the Bible clearly condemn heavy drinking or abuse of wine that is drunkenness. They show that drunkenness leads to many

troubles such as poverty, confusion, stumbling, debauchery, foolishness, and shame.

Because of this wine and strong drink are prohibited to specific groups such as Levites, Nazirites, kings and rulers, priests, bishops, deacons, and older women either in regard to their vow or in regard to their duties. For some of these groups the prohibition is for a specific time and place for example during the time of their consecration for the Nazirites or before ministering at the tabernacle for the Levites etc.

4. Is Drinking Alcohol Permissible in the Bible?

It can be inferred from all the references to wine both positive and negative that the moderate consumption of intoxicating wine is permissible in the Bible whereas the abuse of intoxicating wine or drunkenness is clearly condemned.

How it was that wine was largely used in the Bible with "appreciation" except for its misuse? The following explanation given by Harris is worth of consideration.

Wine was the most intoxicating drink known in ancient times. All the wine was light wine, i.e. not fortified with extra alcohol. Concentrated alcohol was only known in the Middle Ages when the Arabs invented distillation ("alcohol" is an Arabic word) so what is now called liquor or strong drink (i.e. whiskey, gin, etc.) and the twenty per cent fortified wines were unknown in Bible times. Beer was brewed by various methods, but its alcoholic content was light. The strength of natural wines is limited by two factors. The percentage of alcohol will be half of the percentage of the sugar in the juice. And if the alcoholic content is much above 10 or 11 per cent, the yeast cells are killed and fermentation ceases. Probably ancient wines were 7-10 per cent. Drunkenness therefore was of course an ancient curse, but alcoholism was not as common or as severe as it is today. And in an agricultural age, its effects were less deadly than now. To avoid the sin of drunkenness, mingling of wine with water was practiced.¹³

This is the practice of some wine regions in Europe, such as in France and in Switzerland.

¹³ R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* Vol 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 376.

This information is reinforced by Charles as follows.

The wine of the New Testament was not distilled liquor but was made by the process of natural fermentation. The alcoholic content probably did not exceed five or eight percent. The potency was further weakened by the practice of mixing wine and water. Also, the wine was drunk mostly in connection with meals. The modern tavern was unknown in Palestine. Moreover, on those occasions when drunkenness did occur, the disastrous social consequences were negligible in comparison with those in the highly mechanized modern society of our day.¹⁴

Now the question remains: is it permissible for today's Christians to consume alcohol beverages or not? Those who hold moderation position say '*yes it is*', whereas those who hold abstinence position say '*not at all*.' Both groups build their arguments upon Bible verses and try hard to prove that they are right.

The holders of moderate view usually come up with at least four reasons to convince whoever wants to argue with them that drinking alcoholic beverages in moderation is permissible; only drunkenness is condemned.

The first reason they use is that Jesus Himself made intoxicating wine for others to drink. Therefore, today's Christians can drink alcoholic beverages as long as drunkenness is not involved. Obviously they refer to John 2:1-11, the record of Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana.

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. 9 When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until

¹⁴ Howard H. Charles, *Alcohol and the Bible* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1966), 14-15.

now." 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him (NRS).

Commenting the miracle, one of the holders of moderate view writes, "This is the one that really gets the pot boiling, since if Jesus produced wine with alcoholic content, this is clear evidence that there is some leeway for consumption of alcohol."¹⁵ The same idea is supported by Watson when he writes, "Jesus upheld the popular attitude toward wine. He drank wine (Matthew 11:18-19; Luke 7:33-34; Luke 22:18) and permitted its use in festivities like the wedding of Cana (John 2:1-11)."¹⁶

I think one should not draw such a conclusion from this miracle. The purpose of John in recording this first miracle is clearly stated in 2:11 that is Jesus did this to reveal his glory, so that people could believe in him. The text is not a commentary about wine drinking. Commenting this verse, Ngewa writes,

This act in Cana of Galilee was the first of Jesus' miraculous signs (that is, *semeia* – see unit 1) and it had two results according to 2:11: a) Jesus '*revealed his glory*' and b) '*his disciples believed in him*' (see RSV and Greek). Both verbs ('revealed' and 'believe') are aorists focusing on the beginning of a process that is going to continue (see note 26). Jesus made visible that aspect of himself in which his glory shone forth to those who had eyes to see. His disciples also entered into that sphere in which they not only knew who Jesus was, but also believed in him for themselves. Jesus was no longer just the son of Mary; he was also the glorious Savior, the object of faith.¹⁷

The second reason holders of moderate view use, is that Jesus drank intoxicating wine. Therefore it is permissible that today's Christians drink alcohol beverages as long as drunkenness is not involved. They refer to Matthew 11:18-19 cf. Luke 7:33-34; Luke 22:18.

¹⁵ Unknown author, "The Bible and Alcohol: To Drink or not to Drink?" *TEKTON: Education and Apologetics Ministry*, <http://www.tektonics.org/lp/nowine.html> (accessed August 16, 2011).

¹⁶ D. F. Watson "Wine" in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 872.

¹⁷ Samuel M. Ngewa, *The Gospel of JOHN: A Commentary for Pastors, Teachers and Preachers* (Nairobi: Evangelical Publishing House, 2003), 43.

In Matthew 11:18-19 Jesus said, "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

Commenting these verses, Gosselin, one of the supporters of moderate view writes,

That John has come "neither eating nor drinking" obviously refers to the fact that John was a Nazirite for life (Luke 1:15) and did drink no alcoholic beverage. That Jesus was opposed to Jean in this context cannot mean something else than, he was a wine drinker. Assume also that Jesus refrained from alcoholic beverages make this verse totally illogical. Moreover, according to Bauer (1958: 562) the word translated here as drinker can also be translated wine drinker or drunkard ("wine-drinker, drunkard"), which can leave no doubt.¹⁸

If Gosselin was right in his comment, Jesus was not only an intoxicating wine drinker but even a drunkard. This is an exaggeration and I do not think we can be right in approving such an interpretation. It is important to notice that the emphasis of the text is not on wine drinking. It is rather on how the isolation of John's life contrasts with the social character of Christ's life. And as Gordon states,

John was a wilderness prophet. He neither ate nor drank *with others* and avoided human companionships. Into the wilderness were driven the insane and devil-possessed. Hence the suggestion that he himself was of this class. Our Lord associated freely with others at meals and elsewhere. He too was slandered, called a glutton, and charged with being *oinopotes*, a drinker of (intoxicating) wine. There is no proof that he was either.¹⁹

Dunning reinforces this explanation as follows,

That description, however, was not an appraisal of friends but a disparagement of enemies. If we accept this we must accept the other part of the attribution that He was a glutton and that John the Baptist had a devil. There is not an atom of

¹⁸ Paul Gosselin, "Le Débat sur l'Usage de l'Alcool parmi les Chrétiens" *SAMIZDAT*, <http://www.samizdat.qc.ca/vc/theol/alcool.htm> (accessed September 7, 2011).

¹⁹ Ernest Gordon, *Christ, the Apostles, and Wine: An Exegetical Study* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times CO., 1947), 19.

evidence of this in the Gospels. Incidentally it does indicate that the term 'wine-bebber' was one of reproach.²⁰

In Luke 22:18 it is written, "for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." This verse too is used to support that not only did Jesus drink intoxicating wine at the Last Supper with his disciples but also he will drink it new in the kingdom of God.

It is important to recall that it was while eating the Jewish Passover meal that Jesus took the cup from that meal and called it the new covenant in his blood. Since in the ordinance of the Passover given to the congregation of Israel they were forbidden to eat what is leavened (Exodus 12:15, 19, 20), we can deduce that the Jews did not use intoxicating wine at the Passover meal. This might be so, in part, since children also drank the Passover cup. Even if this was intoxicating it would be the wine mixed with water and that had very low alcohol content. As Walker explains it,

The Old Testament says nothing about the use of any wine at the Passover Feast. The Jewish Talmud, which contains oral tradition of Judaism from about 200 B.C. to 200 A.D., states in a most important reference (Pesahim 108b) that the four cups every Jew was to drink during the Passover ritual was to be mixed in a ratio of 3 parts water to 1 part wine. It is not clear whether this was a practice prior to the time of Christ or later on. It is also unclear whether the wine was alcoholic or unfermented, as both were mixed with water. If the wine of that day, which had only 7 – 10 percent alcoholic content, were mixed with 3 parts water, the resulting would not have caused drunkenness...

It is noteworthy that the Lord did not refer to the drink as wine (Greek *oinos*), but rather called it the "fruit of the vine" (Mat 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). The Greek word "*genematos*" is translated "fruit", and signifies literally "that which is produced" by the vine. Does the vine ever produce a juice with alcohol? Never! The natural flavor of the grape is sweet and untainted with any fermentation. Alcohol comes as a result of man-made process whereby the sugar is converted into ethyl alcohol. What the Lord Jesus drank was the product of vine, not of men.²¹

²⁰ T. G. Dunning, *Alcohol and the Christian Ethic* (Wallington: The Religious Education Press, 1958), 36.

²¹ William H. Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept* (Kissimmee: Willam H. Walker, 1983), 33-34.

The third reason supporters of the moderate view use is since Paul advised Timothy to no longer drink only water, but to take a little wine for the sake of his stomach and his frequent ailments, drinking alcoholic beverages with moderation is fine as long as drunkenness is not involved.

I do not think it is fair to draw such a conclusion from this verse. Even if Paul was referring to alcoholic wine in this passage, the context of the verse is alcohol as a medicine, not as a beverage. It is as someone commented,

Even in this medical context Paul speaks only of "a little wine." It is clear from these words that what Paul is speaking of, is the addition of a little wine to the water Timothy is drinking in order to make it safe to drink. The water supply in the Middle East and especially in Bible times was far from healthy. Sickness was the regular consequence of drinking water that had not been sterilized by a little wine... Paul's direction to Timothy does not give any believer license to drink wine as a beverage. He does not advocate drinking wine instead of water. It is noteworthy that he speaks of "drinking water" and "using" the wine; the wine was to complement the water, not replace it. At most his words permit the medicinal use of alcohol.²²

For Litfin, a good interpretation of 1 Timothy 5:23 flows naturally from the reference to purity in verse 22. As he comments he also supports the above point of view,

This verse may be only a somewhat disjointed bit of personal advice to Timothy or it may flow more naturally from the reference to purity in verse 22. Perhaps Timothy was inclined to an ascetism which associated purity with total abstinence (cf. 4:3-5), which in turn led in Timothy's case to stomach ailments and frequent illness, perhaps due to the poor quality of the water he drank. Paul thus qualified his exhortation to purity by encouraging Timothy to drink a little wine (*oinô oligô*) for his stomach's sake, because of his "frequent illnesses." This instruction applies only to drink wine for medicinal purposes, of course, and therefore contributes little or nothing to either side of the debate over the use of wine as a beverage.²³

²² Unknown author, "Drinking Alcohol", <http://www.eaec.org/bibleanswers/alcohol.htm> (accessed September 05, 2011).

²³ Duane A. Litfin, "1 Timothy" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs: ChariotVictor Publishing, 1983), 745.

The fourth reason supporters of the moderate view use is since Paul requires that church leaders namely bishops, deacons, and older women must not be "addicted to wine" or "not indulging in much wine" or "slaves to drink", he is against drunkenness rather than merely alcohol drink. Therefore, today's church leaders as well as any Christian can drink alcoholic beverages with moderation as long as drunkenness is not involved. They refer to 1 Timothy 3:2-3, 8; Titus 1:7; 2:3. Following is what Paul wrote,

"Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, **not a drunkard**, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money" (1 Timothy 3:2-3);

"For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or **addicted to wine** or violent or greedy for gain" (Titus 1:7). The expression "addicted to wine" is the translation of the Greek word *paroinos* that is the contracted form of "*para oinos*" which, literally means "by wine" and it denotes one who sits "by" wine; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it. The expression "not addicted to wine" (NASB) is translated in many ways such as "not given to drunkenness" (NIV); "not given to wine" (KJB); "not a drunkard" (ESV); "he must not be a heavy drinker" (NLT); "he must not drink excessively" (ISV); etc. It cannot be inferred from the use of the Greek word "*paroinos*" here, that wine was absolutely and totally prohibited; for the word does not properly express that idea. Rather, it means that one who is in the habit of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulged in it, should not be admitted to ministry.

"Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, **not indulging in much wine**, not greedy for money" (1 Timothy 3:8);

"Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or **slaves to drink**; they are to teach what is good" (Titus 2:3). The expression "slaves to drink" that can be rightly translated "enslaved to" comes from the Greek word "*douloô*", which means to be a servant of or be in bondage to. This is what would be called "addicted." Therefore "slaves to drink" and "addicted to wine" are synonymous and mean older women are not to be in bondage to wine. Rather, they are to show the difference between themselves and others by their self-control.

Commenting Titus 1:7, MacDonald affirms, "As for the elders, they are not forbidden to drink wine, but they should not drink to excess, which can lead to quarrels."²⁴ The same view can be implied from Andria's comment on Titus 2:3 about older women as he speaks of self-control,

Older women should be models for younger women, particularly through their godly lifestyle and their teaching (2:3). Too many old people forfeit respect because they are malicious and pass their time in gossip or drinking. Wine was a part of everyday food of Cretans, as it was in all regions of the Mediterranean, but that was no excuse for drinking too much of it. Older Christian women can show the differences between themselves and others by their self-control.²⁵

Although moderate drink is inferred from these verses listed above, supporters of abstinence view find no necessity to express it out. Probably because in doing so they might lead many people to alcohol drink thereby to drunkenness. Instead, they choose to focus on consequences of alcohol addiction as MacArthur writes it about 1 Timothy 3:2-3,

An elder who is not addicted to wine is a man who does not have reputation as a drinker. He doesn't frequent bars or involve himself in the scenes associated with drinking... A man who is a drinker has no place in the ministry. He is a poor

²⁴ William MacDonald, *Le Commentaire Biblique du Disciple-NT* French Translation of *The Believer's Bible Commentary-NT* (Belarus: La Joie de l'Eternel, 2003), 1079.

²⁵ Solomon Andria, "Titus" in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokumboh Adeyemo (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 1484.

example, and will surely be the cause of serious sin and disaster in the lives of others who follow his example as drinkers, justifying their indulgence because of their leader. A leader must be a man whose associations are radically different from those of the world, and whose example leads others to righteous conduct, not sin.²⁶

5. The Bible Condemns Drunkenness but also from the Texts above Addiction and Slavery to Alcohol:

However, even it turns out that drinking a little of wine is not necessarily a sin, the Bible is very clear that drunkenness is a sin. Many verses both from the Old and the New Testament condemn it but let us consider how explicitly the following verses refer to its gravity.

"Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and **drunkenness**, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy" (Romans 13:13).

"But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, **drunkard**, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one" (1 Corinthians 5:11).

"Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, **drunkards**, revilers, and robbers-- none of these will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

"Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, **drunkenness**, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

²⁶ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary 1 Timothy* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1995), 110.

"**Do not get drunk with wine**, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

"You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, **drunkenness**, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead" (1 Peter 4:3-5).

In these verses, Paul strongly warns against drunkenness because it brings no glory to God. It is a sin that leads to host of sins such as sexual immorality (Genesis 19:32-35; Hosea 4:18), idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:7), lawlessness (1 Corinthians 11:22), strife (Proverbs 23:29-30), woe and sorrow (Proverbs 23:29-30), error (Isaiah 28:7), contempt of God's works (Isaiah 5:12), scorning (Hosea 7:5), and rioting and wantonness (Romans 13:13).

Thinking theologically about drunkenness, Welch declares,

When you look at it closely, drunkenness is a lordship problem. Who is your master, God or your desires? Do you desire God above all else, or do you desire something in creation more than you desire the Creator? At root, drunkards are worshipping another god – alcohol. Drunkenness violates the command "You shall have no other gods before me." Heavy drinkers love alcohol. They are controlled by it as if they were its subjects and it was their ruler-lover. This alcohol-worship, however, is actually a form of self-worship. We worship people and things to get what we want. Those who worship money do so in order to get what they want. Heavy drinkers drink neither to glorify God nor to love their neighbor. They drink to indulge their own desires, whether those desires are pleasure, freedom from pain, alleviation of fear, forgetting, vengeance, or a host of others.²⁷

²⁷ Edward T. Welch, *ADDICTIONS A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Company, 2001), 23.

Scripture often draws a connection between drunkenness and sexual perversion, prostitution or immorality, and every other form of corruption living. Commenting on Ephesians 5:18, MacArthur writes,

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul was therefore not simply making a moral but also a theological contrast. He was not only speaking of the moral and social evils of drunkenness, but of the spiritually perverted use of drunkenness as a means of worship. Christians are not to seek religious fulfillment through such pagan means as getting *drunk with wine*, but are to find their spiritual fulfillment and enjoyment by being "filled with the Spirit." The believer has no need for the artificial, counterfeit, degrading, destructive, and idolatrous ways of the world. He has God's own Spirit indwelling him, the Spirit whose great desire is to give believers the fullest benefits and enjoyment of their high position as children of God.²⁸

The gravity of drunkenness resides not only in that it is a lordship problem but also and especially that it separates from God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Commenting Galatians 5:19-21 cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Walker states,

Drunkenness is definitely listed as one of the "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19-21), along with fornication, idolatry and murder. In conclusion Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Therefore, drunkenness is not only assigned a place with the works of the flesh, but it is treated as sin that separates from God.²⁹

6. Exhortation for not to Drink:

In addition to his warning against drunkenness, Paul exhorts Christians to live out their Christian freedom and testimony the way that builds others up to the glory of God rather than becoming an obstacle to the weak as it is written, "It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble" (Romans 14:21).

²⁸ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary EPHESIANS* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1986), 234.

²⁹ Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept*, 19.

One important question to be asked in this context is, Is it more important to be able to indulge a taste for wine than it is to be a good witness for Christ and to avoid being a stumbling block to others? As Christians we should always be ready to deny ourselves, even something that may be perfectly legitimate and right, if it will stand in the way of witness for Christ or will be a hindrance to ourselves or others. Scripture teaches this very clearly, "Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble" (Romans 14: 13, 21).

In Scripture, the term "brother" refers to family members, fellow human beings, and other believers in Christ. We should never act in such a way as to cause ourselves or another believer to fall or be hindered in their walk with Christ, nor should we be a stumbling block in the sinner's path to the Savior. In fact, "Christian freedom in regard to the use of alcoholic beverages should not be thought of primarily, as is frequently the case, in terms of the right to drink. There is another and more exciting way to view it. It is the freedom not to drink."³⁰

Reflecting on these verses about being a stumbling block to a weak brother or sister in regard to drinking alcohol, Leif Jensen and John Bonin write,

We must consider how drinking alcohol might affect other Christians. A brother who has struggled with alcohol may see you drinking, knowing that you are a Christian, and have his conscience negatively impacted. He might feel free to drink again and then fall into sin. In this case you want to be sure that the brother you are with will not stumble because of your drinking (Rom 14:21; 1 Cor 10:23-31). If you think that he might, then clearly you must avoid drinking in his presence. In this case the subject of a Christian drinking falls into the same category Paul speaks about when he says if eating meat would cause my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again. (1 Cor 8:13). However, it is even worse

³⁰ Charles, *Alcohol and the Bible*, 25.

than that because of the addictive possibility. It is reported that one out of every ten people who take their first drink will become alcoholics. (Whether it is one in ten, one in twenty, or whatever, is not the point.) What if a brother who looks up to you sees you taking a drink, follows your lead and becomes an alcoholic? Since practicing alcoholics cannot enter the kingdom of God, you have severely caused that brother to stumble, and then you fall under the admonition Christ spoke of in Mt 8:16 when He said it would be better for us to have a millstone hung around our neck and thrown into the sea than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. (Many think the little ones Christ spoke of are only "children," but it could also apply to someone who is a new Christian, or what Paul refers to as a "weaker brother.")

We must also consider unbelievers. Many unbelievers observe (very closely) those of us who call ourselves Christians. Will an unbeliever be confused if we drink alcohol? Will he think that Christians are not concerned about getting drunk or buzzed? Will they think you are a hypocrite? While we are to become, "all things to all people" (1 Cor 9:22), we are not to do so in a way that would give us, another brother or an unbeliever justification for sinning (1 Cor 9:19-23).³¹

Moreover, in regard to liberty that they have in Christ, Christians are called to discern and to choose between that which is merely permissible and that which is beneficial and constructive as it is written,

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything (1 Cor 6:12).
 "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other (1 Cor 10:23-24).

There are many things not specifically forbidden in Scripture that we may properly engage in but which are neither profitable nor convenient. In this age when alcohol is one of the Devil's principal means of catching souls and bringing them to temporal and eternal ruin, surely the drinking of alcohol by the Christian, even if it is permissible, it is neither beneficial nor constructive.

About Christian liberty in 1 Corinthians 6:12 Lowery writes,

³¹ Leif Jensen and John Bonin, "Alcoholic Beverages and Christians, Do they Mix?" <http://www.christianfallacies.com/articles/jensen/alcoholicBeveragesAndChristians.html> (accessed September 5, 2011).

The words, everything is permissible for me, had apparently become a slogan to cloak the immorality of some in Corinth. The statement was true but it required qualification. Paul qualified liberty with the principle of love applied to both neighbor and self. Liberty which was not beneficial but detrimental to someone else was not loving (1 Cor 8:1; 10:23) and was to be avoided. So too, liberty which became slavery (I will not be mastered by anything) was not love but hatred of self.³²

Above all, Christians must seek God's glory in everything that they do as it is written, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 6:12). In this context, drinking alcoholic beverages if it causes a weak brother or sister to stumble, it certainly brings no glory to God who loves this weak brother or sister and seeks to save them.

It should also be remembered that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and one who destroys the temple, God will destroy him too (1 Corinthians 3:17). This principle must guide Christians to understand how important they are to keep their bodies pure in a relationship that honors God. This also applies to things which the Christian uses. Excessive alcohol and intoxicating liquors destroy the body and do not facilitate a life that glorifies God.

However, there is evidence that temperate drinking of red wine is actually beneficial for the body as it lowers cholesterol in the blood, and has a calming influence as it can help the mental transition between work and relaxation.³³ This is thought to be one reason there are lower rates of heart disease in some wine growing regions.

In summary, although the Bible clearly condemns the abuse of wine that is drunkenness, it does not condemn the use of wine especially for medical purpose (Luke 10:34; 1 Timothy 5:23), as refreshment (2 Samuel 16:1-2), and as means to improve sad

³² David K. Lowery, "1 Corinthians" in *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 516.

³³ "The positive and a few negative aspect of wine, and red wine in particular." <http://www.meteck.org/wine.html> (Accessed Nov 18, 2011).

mood (Psalms 104:14-15). Although it commands abstinence for some people under special circumstances, it does not insist on it for all people under all circumstances. Although the moderate use of wine can be inferred from positive references to wine in the Bible, Christians, regardless their freedom in Christ, must discern and choose between that which is merely permissible (to drink alcoholic beverages) and that which is beneficial and constructive (not to drink alcoholic beverages). They should drink alcohol with a sober mind and thoughtful wisdom taking into consideration the weaknesses of the company they are in, so they become not a stumbling block to a weak brother or sister for whom Christ has died. Also they can freely choose not to drink alcoholic beverages as part of their consecration to the Lord's service as they are to do everything to the glory of God.

What the Bible says about drinking alcoholic beverages is clear enough and constitutes a guideline for whoever wants to live in the way that glorifies God. Nevertheless, many Christians without self-control become addicts to alcoholic beverages and thereby live a life controlling sin. Since God loves them and wants to set them free, they need to know how to get out of this bondage of sin.

What Does the Bible Say about Recovery from Life Controlling Sin?

The answer to this question leads us to see what progressive sanctification is, what it does involve, and how it can be applied to a recovery from a life controlling sin and particularly to a physical appetite such as to alcohol.

1. What is Progressive Sanctification?

Progressive Sanctification is that gracious work of God in a believer whereby He enables him to replace works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, thereby causing him to become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. This process of spiritual growth continues over the course of a Christian's lifetime and is, therefore, neither instantaneous nor complete, but gradually occurs as he appropriates God's sanctifying truth which is found solely in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.³⁴

Commenting this definition, the author shows that Christian life is a transformation process that engages and redeems every aspect of our humanity. God Himself actively works to change us; we actively work to change; the process will be completed on the day of Christ. God initiates and sustains a change process in three steps: 1) that is progressive throughout our lives, 2) that call for our active participation in response to God's word of promise and command, and 3) that is incomplete in this life. God will perfect us when we see Jesus face to face.³⁵

According to Grudem who shares the same idea, there are three stages of sanctification.³⁶

a) Sanctification has a definite beginning at regeneration: This initial step in sanctification involves a definite break from the ruling power and love of sin, so that the believer is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin. Paul says, "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ... For sin will have no dominion over you" (Romans 6:11, 14).

b) Sanctification increases throughout life: Although Paul says that his readers have been set free from sin (Romans 6:18) and that they are "dead to sin and alive to

³⁴ Unknown author, "Progressive Sanctification"
http://www.nanc.org/Theological_Considerations/Progressive_Sanctification.aspx
 (Accessed August 18, 2011).

³⁵ Unknown author, "Progressive Sanctification"
http://www.nanc.org/Theological_Considerations/Progressive_Sanctification.aspx
 (Accessed August 18, 2011).

³⁶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 747-49.

God" (Romans 6:11), he however recognizes that sin remains in their lives, so he tells them not to let it reign and not to yield to it (Romans 6:12-13). Their task, therefore, as Christians is to grow more and more in sanctification, just as they previously grew more and more in sin: "Just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification" (Rom 6:19).

c) Sanctification is completed at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies). Because there is sin that still remains in our hearts even though we have become Christians (Romans 6:12-13; 1 John 1:8), our sanctification will never be completed in this life. But once we die and go to be with the Lord, then our sanctification is completed in one sense, for our souls are set free from indwelling sin and are made perfect (Hebrews 12:23).

According to Grudem, progressive sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives. He says that God and man cooperate in sanctification.³⁷

Since sanctification is primarily a work of God, Paul prays, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). One specific role of God the Father in this sanctification is his process of disciplining us as his children (Hebrews 12:5-11). Paul tells the Philippians, "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), thus indicating something of the way in which God sanctifies them – both by causing them to want his will and by giving power to do it. This is important since the human will is a key factor in overcoming alcoholism. But it is the daily experiencing of the will in concert with God's will that aids the advancement of

³⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 753-54.

sanctification. This is in part the meaning of picking up our cross daily as Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:23-24).

Living by the will of God is for the Christian to offer "his own body a living sacrifice and be transformed by the renewing of his mind" (Romans 12:1-2), work on his holiness by refraining from misconduct, and by doing what is good. To do the will of God, he must know it. This will of God revealed many years ago to Israelites is now made known to every Christian through the written word of God. Therefore, he can even be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that he may lead life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as he bears fruit in every good work and as he grows in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9-10).

The role of God the Son, Jesus Christ, in sanctification is that he earned our sanctification for us. Therefore Paul could say that God made Christ to be "our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

But it is specifically God the Holy Spirit who works within us to change us and sanctify us, giving us greater holiness of life. It is the Holy Spirit who produces in us the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23), those character qualities that are part of greater and greater sanctification. If we grow in sanctification we "walk by the Spirit" and are "led by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16-18; cf. Romans 8:14), that is, we are more and more responsive to the desires and promptings of the Holy Spirit in our life and character. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness, and he produces holiness within us.

However, because progressive sanctification is "a progressive work of God and man..." the role which we as Christians are to play is indicated by Romans 8:13, where Paul says, "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." Here Paul acknowledges that it is "by the Spirit" that we are able to do this. But he also says we must do it! It is not the Holy Spirit who is commanded to put to death the deeds of the flesh, but Christians. Similarly, Paul tells the Philippians, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). Likewise, Christians are to work at this growth in sanctification knowing that God is at work in them. That is the work of God in sanctification and means that their own work is empowered by God; therefore it will be valuable and will bear positive results.

In other words, Nicotra speaks of three distinctly different aspects to the process of sanctification: past, present, and future.³⁸

- Past: At conversion a believer is positionally set apart in Christ (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1:30; 6:9-11; Hebrews 10:10, 14). By virtue of his or her union with Christ, every believer is sanctified and transferred from the power and dominion of Satan into the kingdom and service of God (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4-6; Colossians 1:12, 13). This work is accomplished by God, without human aid, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. In this sense a believer is *already* sanctified.

- Present: This is the process by which the Holy Spirit gradually changes the believer's life and grants him or her victory over the remaining vestiges of sin. Though

³⁸ Vincent Nicotra, "Sanctification" <http://www.christianfallacies.com/articles/nicotra/sanctification.html> (access September 17, 2011).

sanctification is the work of God in the heart of an individual, it is accomplished in harmony with the human response. The present aspect of sanctification has also been referred to as practical sanctification because believers must “practically” work out their salvation in everyday life. In this sense a believer is *becoming* sanctified.

- Future: This is the perfection the believer will enjoy at the resurrection. When Jesus Christ returns every believer will receive a new body that will be free from the corruption of sin. The Christian will no longer have to resist the temptations of sin and lust nor will he have to continue to try to grow toward perfection. His sanctification will be complete. He will be wholly and forever set apart to God from sin. In this sense, a believer *will be* perfectly sanctified.

To make it short, progressive sanctification includes three stages: in past, the believer has been sanctified, in present he is being sanctified, and in future he will be perfectly sanctified. Before we apply this to a believer's recovery from a life controlling sin, let us see what the progressive sanctification involves.

2. What does Progressive Sanctification Involve?

Progressive sanctification in its present stage involves growth in holiness, spiritual maturity, and a good understanding of the relationship of faith with works.

a) *Growth in holiness*: There are many aspects to the role that a believer is to play in sanctification. He is to "Strive...for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14); he is to "abstain from immorality" and so to obey the will of God, which is his "sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). John says that those who hope to be like Christ when he appears will actively work at purification in this life: "And every

one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). Paul tells the Corinthians to turn away from immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18), and not to have partnership with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). He then says, "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). This kind of striving for obedience to God and for holiness may involve great effort on part of the believer, for Peter tells his readers to "make every effort" to grow in character qualities that accord with godliness (2 Peter 1:5). Many specific passages of the New Testament encourage attention to various aspects of holiness and godliness in life (see Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:17; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:5; 1 Peter 2:11-12). Believer is continually to build up patterns and habits of holiness, for one measure of maturity is that mature Christians "have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:14).

As means to grow in holiness, the New Testament simply encourages believers repeatedly to give themselves to Bible reading and meditation (Psalms 1:2; Matthew 4:4; John 17:17), prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6), worship (Ephesians 5:18-20), witnessing (Matthew 28:19-20), Christian fellowship (Hebrews 10:24-25), and self-discipline or self-control (Galatians 5:23; Titus 1:8).

b) Spiritual maturity: Spiritual maturity or spiritual growth can only occur in a person who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her Savior. Learning how to grow spiritually is a life-long journey which occurs as a believer reads and applies God's Word to his life. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches us, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." In order for spiritual growth to occur, a

believer must be taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained by God's Word. Then he will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. This is the essence of spiritual maturity or spiritual growth.

Spiritual maturity or spiritual growth is a life-long process of manifesting the acts of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) less and less and producing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) more and more. It is important to notice that the Holy Spirit is the one who produces the fruit in us. Yes, a believer must submit himself to the Spirit's leading, but it is the Spirit who produces the fruit of spiritual growth in his life. What does spiritual growth look like? Galatians 5:22-23 has the answer, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." If a believer is becoming more loving, more joyful, more kind, more self-controlled, then, he can rest assured that spiritual growth is genuinely occurring in his life.

Spiritual maturity should be a priority for a believer. "Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:13-14). A believer is not to be milk-fed. Instead, he is called to chew on the "meat" of God's Word. He is to discover God's truth by in-depth Bible study and feed himself spiritually, and then apply that sustenance to his life as he walks in the Holy Spirit.

c) Relationship of faith with works: progressive sanctification requires of a believer a good understanding of the relationship of faith with works. Many people are confused about the relationship between faith and works thinking that we are saved by

cooperating with God by doing good works. It is very important to know that justification is "God's great act of salvation by which he declares the repentant sinner righteous before him. Instead of having the status of one who is guilty and condemned, the sinner now has the status of one who is right with God."³⁹ This declaration is based completely and totally on the work of Christ on the Cross. A person is justified by faith (Romans 5:1); that is, he is made right before God by his faith in Christ. We are not saved by our works or our works added to the sacrifice of Christ. Our works, our good deeds, have absolutely no affect upon our salvation. Our good works do not get us salvation, nor do they help us keep our salvation. This is because our good works are filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6). Besides, if we could be saved by works, then righteousness would have been based on the law and Christ would not have needed to die. Galatians 2:21 says, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing." But, Christ did need to die which proves our works cannot save us.

However this does not mean that we are not to have good works. James says, "Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith" (James 2:18); "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26). Commenting this Grudem writes,

James is simply saying here that "faith" that has no results or "works" is not real faith at all; it is "dead" faith. He is not denying Paul's clear teaching that justification (in the sense of a declaration of right legal standing before God) is by faith alone apart from works of the law; he is simply affirming a different truth, namely, that "justification" in the sense of an outward showing that one is righteous only occurs as we see evidence in a person's life. To paraphrase, James is saying that a person is "shown to be righteous by his works, and not by his faith alone." This is something with which Paul also would certainly agree (2 Cor 13:5; Gal 5:19-24).⁴⁰

³⁹ Don Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Dictionary* (Brisbane: Bridgeway Publications, 2004), 243.

⁴⁰ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 732.

Furthermore, in John 14:15 Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Also, 1 John 2:3 says, "And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments." Thus, we are not saved by our works because we cannot be. The only way to be saved is to trust in the finished sacrificial work of Christ on the cross. But, once saved, the person is now changed. He is a new creation and the old things have passed away (2 Corinthians. 5:17). This means that our old sinful ways are gone (or on their way out as we struggle against them). It also means that we then do good works to honor God. We don't do good works to be saved or stay saved. We do good works because we are saved. This means that our good works don't save us in any way, but once we are saved we naturally obey God's law and do good works which is a sign of our being saved. So the relationship between faith and works is simple. We are saved by faith, not by works. But, once saved, we do good works because we are already saved.

If progressive sanctification does involve all this, how can a believer apply it to his recovery from a life controlling sin and particularly to a physical appetite such as to alcohol?

3. Progressive Sanctification Applied to a Recovery from a Life Controlling Sin:

Such an application must include repentance from sin; change into the likeness of Christ, and perseverance in living according to the gospel.

a) Repentance: For a believer who is enslaved by the sin of alcoholism, there is still hope of recovery. God is able to deliver him completely by cleansing, sanctifying, and justifying him (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Though alcohol abuse is a failing of the flesh

(Galatians 5:19-21), the Holy Spirit can, and will, produce the self-control needed to overcome it (Galatians 5:22-23). The Bible says, "No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Proverbs 28:13); "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective" (James 5:16); "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

Therefore, for the believer to embrace recovery from alcohol abuse, dependency, and addiction, he needs to truly repent and turn away from sin and toward God. He needs to get rid of the things in his life by which he is most easily tempted and drawn away from God. If he is serious with God, he will realize that these items or habits grieve the Holy Spirit so he will desire to remove them from his life. In regard to alcohol addiction, he must show there is an initial giving up of the drink as demonstration of the past aspect of progressive sanctification (I HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED) and (I HAVE BEEN SAVED).⁴¹

Repentance involves a complete change in the mind and will of the believer. It is more than mere sorrow for sin; it is surrender to God. A person may be sorry for his sin because of its consequences, but still have no thought for God. True repentance

⁴¹ Similarly to the sanctification, Don Fleming explains that there are past, present and future aspects of salvation. The past aspect is that believers already have been saved because of Christ's death for them. Their sin has been dealt with, they are no longer under condemnation, and they have the assurance of eternal life (John 5:24; Rom 5:1-2; Eph 2:1,8). The present aspect is that believers continue to experience the saving power of God in the victory over sin in their daily lives (1 Cor 1:18; Phil 2:12; 2 Tim 1:8-9). The future aspect is that believers will experience the fulfillment of their salvation at the return of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:24; Phil 3:20) cf. Don Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Dictionary*, 386-87.

recognizes the character of sin as deserving God's judgment, and turns from that sin to ask God's forgiveness.

The will is this aspect of the soul of man to choose and decide. It is the exercise of this right to choose also called "free will" that determines the destiny of man (Joshua 24:14-15, John 7:17; James 4:4). The human will is free in the sense that man can choose anything that is consistent with his nature. This is also true in the moral field. Adam would want to sin or not sin. After the fall, the ability that the man had not to sin, became his capacity to sin. Therefore, the will of man must be submitted to the will of God as was that of Christ (John 6:38-40; Luke 9:23-24). While our soul cannot save us, it does guide us. But it needs to be strengthened by God. Likewise, something must be said of obedience.

Although obedience expresses an action which can exist in ordinary human relationships (such as servants to masters or children to parents), its most significant reference is to a relationship that should exist between man and God. God reveals himself to man by his voice and words. Words are intended to be heard. This obviously involves a physical reception of the words with an assumed mental uncertainty of their meaning. But in terms of man's reception of God's revelation, this in itself is not true hearing. True hearing is faith which receives the divine word and translates it into action. It is a response of faith. It is a positive, active response, not merely passive listening and thought. To hear is to act. In other words, to really hear God's word is to obey God's word. One Greek word for obedience is *akouô*, where we get our English word acoustics (related to hearing something with proper volume and clarity). To obey God is to hear him, to listen to him. In the same way when we speak to our children and want them to

do the right thing we say, 'Listen to me!' or 'Are you listening to me?' To hear the loving voice of the Father or Jesus speaking to us is the precursor to obedience. This empowers the human will to operate in concert with God's loving directives in our lives.

b) Change into the likeness of Christ: Here, an alcoholic addict believer who repented from sin must show the process by which he maintains his sanctification. This is the present aspect of sanctification referred to as practical sanctification because the believer must "practically" work out his salvation in everyday life. In this sense a believer can say, "I AM BEING SANCTIFIED" and "I AM SAVED."

Practically then, a repentant believer needs to abide in the Scriptures, that is to study God's word every day and also with other believers in his community. Jesus said in John 8:31-32, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." It is important to notice that this promise is conditional. We are not really disciples of Jesus unless we abide (remain, dwell, stay) in his word, that is the Bible. This shows how important it is for us to study the Bible. True maturity will never come by experiences or feelings, but only through the ongoing study of God's Word. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Moreover, he needs to remain in fellowship with other believers on regular basis. "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Notice that believers are to "provoke one another to love and good deeds." It is not God's intention that we be outsiders and on

our own. Therefore, it is very important for a repentant believer to find other believers in his area which he can meet with for prayer, Bible study, and worship on a regular basis.

In addition to his remaining in fellowship with other believers, the repentant believer needs to praise God each time he is tempted to drink, as it is written, "Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Hebrews 10:15). It is important that he changes his perspective from himself to God, praising God the Problem-solver rather than the problem itself. As long as his attention is on alcohol, he is honoring it. But if his attention is on God, he is honoring him, as it is written, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

As he still needs practical spiritual help, he may seek out a spiritual counselor (a pastor or a God fearing friend), and ask him to pray for deliverance for him, especially from psychological and physical dependence, and even from the desire to drink. As he prays for his own or someone else prays for him, it is important that he decides not to drink right now and live his decision one day at time not to "worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34).

If the alcohol addict is a non-believer, it is important that he seeks his salvation first. He is to surrender his life to Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord, asking God to forgive him, to save him, and to fill him with the Holy Spirit, for a drunkard cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10), however "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Then, he is to pray for deliverance

from this alcohol bondage, and offer thanks and praise to God for his deliverance and power to overcome the desire to drink.

c) Perseverance in living according to the gospel: God requires of Christians not only that they believe the gospel, but also that they persevere in living according to the gospel, regardless of the difficulties they meet. Perseverance is proof of the authenticity of faith and leads to spiritual maturity (John 8:31; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3-4).

If a repentant believer has true faith in God, he will prove it by his steadfast trust in the power and promises. His perseverance is not something God rewards by giving him salvation, but something that gives proof of his salvation. It shows that his faith is authentic (Mark 13:13; Luke 21:26; Philippians 3:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

At times a repentant believer may be tempted to give up his Christian commitment. The source of his troubles may be the trials of life, persecution, worry, false teaching, and especially the desire to drink. He has to fight against these temptations by training himself in godliness, resisting the pressures of the world, continuing steadfastly in the truth he has believed, learning more of God through the Scripture, and giving himself wholeheartedly to whatever God has entrusted to him (1 Timothy 4:15; 6:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 10:23). As he fights against the temptation to go back and drink more alcohol, he has to endure the temptation and say, "Even in the future, I will need God's help to remain sober, and even to drink alcohol no more." With this perseverance in mind, he can say, "I SHALL BE SANCTIFIED" and "I SHALL BE SAVED." The result of his perseverance will be the experience of salvation in its fullest expression at the return of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:24-25; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Revelation 2:26-28).

In this second chapter we examined what the Bible says about drinking alcoholic beverages and how a repentant believer can recover from life controlling sins and particularly to a physical appetite such as to alcohol. We have suggested that progressive sanctification is the way for the Christian to embrace recovery from alcohol abuse, dependency, and addiction.

In the chapter that follows I will review the literature that informed me and challenged me during my research on my topic.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

I read many books to help me understand the issue of alcoholism and how I can mobilize the Chadian Church to understand and treat alcoholism. In this chapter I will review some of these books and articles that informed me and challenged me during my research on my topic. I begin with supporters of moderate use of alcohol then I will add supporters of total abstinence and will end with two responses to alcohol.

Moderate View on the Use of Alcoholic Beverages

Among Christians some believe that moderate use of alcoholic beverage is what the Scriptures teach. It is the excess that leads to sin.

1. In his article "Does the Bible permit drinking ANY wine or alcohol?"¹ edited by BibleStudy.org, Norman Rowe holds that the terms for "wine" in the original languages (Hebrew and Greek) in most cases make obvious reference to fermented, and therefore alcoholic, grape juice. In the instances where such direct indication is absent, there appears no indication that it could be otherwise. He deplores that many churches believe and teach that biblical wine is really unfermented grape juice and concludes that according to all indications both implicit and explicit, there is no possible way for this position to appear at all feasible. He refers to some examples as follows:

The Greek word used in John 2:1-11 for "wine" and in Paul's command to Timothy to drink wine (1 Tim 5:23) is the term *oinos*. This same word appears in Eph 5:18 ("be not drunk with wine") and Luke 10:34 ("and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine"). Can you get drunk on grape juice? Would you pour

¹ Norman Rowe, "Does the Bible permit drinking ANY wine or alcohol?" <http://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/does-bible-permit-drinking-wine-alcohol.html> (accessed August 16, 2011).

grape juice on a wound? Of course not! You get drunk on alcoholic wine and fermented wine would provide sufficient alcoholic content to serve as antiseptic.²

The author explores negative and positive Bible references to wine in both Old Testament and New Testament and deplores that those who espouse total abstinence make all of the positive reference to wine relate to grape juice and claim that all of the negative ones display fermented wine. To him in every case the words are the same, but somehow they think that they may supply a different meaning on those words to suit their goals. He concludes that moderation is the key to drinking. He puts it as follows:

The proper relationship between alcohol and Christians is really quite plain. It is merely a matter of moderation. As Paul told Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine..." When he wrote to the Ephesians he specified, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess..." He said to not get drunk, but he did not say to totally abstain from wine. What is absent is just as important as what is present. "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Phil 4:5). Christians and alcohol can mix and, when celebrating Christ's death, wine is an integral and even vital ingredient. Paul again makes this point clear in 1 Cor 11:20-29 by outlining the aspects of the Passover service and making special mention of the proper spirit of this solemn celebration and admonishing against overeating and drunkenness. And again you DO NOT get drunk from drinking grape juice, making the use of wine (as Christ obviously did) an OBLIGATORY part of the service. Abstinence is NOT taught by the Bible, but neither is drunkenness. Moderation is the key.³

2. In his article "Abstain, Abstinence" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Gary T. Meadors argues that the term "abstinence" is often identified with the question of the use or nonuse of alcoholic beverages. The Bible consistently condemns drunkenness, but it cannot be viewed as teaching total abstinence from fermented wine.⁴

² Rowe, "Does the Bible permit drinking ANY wine or alcohol?" <http://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/does-bible-permit-drinking-wine-alcohol.html> (accessed August 16, 2011).

³ Rowe, "Does the Bible permit drinking ANY wine or alcohol?" <http://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/does-bible-permit-drinking-wine-alcohol.html> (accessed August 16, 2011).

⁴ Gary T. Meadors "Abstain, Abstinence" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 1996), 9.

The linguistic, historical-cultural, and contextual aspects of Scripture are often abused by those who claim that the Bible requires total abstinence.

He recalls how the historical setting of Israel as one of the leading and most respected wine-producing nations in their part of the ancient world is well documented. The blessings of this product are recorded in the Bible along with the evils that come from its abuse. Wine is a major image of joy and blessing (cf. Genesis 27:28; Psalms 104:14-15). The messianic era is depicted as a time of great blessing via this imagery (Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13; Zechariah 9:17). The destruction of wine is noted as a calamity in the life of Israel (Deuteronomy 28:30-39; Isaiah 62:8; 65:21; Micah 6:15; Zephaniah 1:13). Then he concludes:

Believers in any given time period or geographical location may choose total abstinence for numerous reasons. One may use certain passages of Scripture just like ancient Israel did. The abuse of strong drink has plagued all cultures and reasons to abstain abound. Careful biblical interpretation, however; requires that the choice to abstain be made for reasons other than the demand of the biblical pattern.⁵

3. In his article "Le débat sur l'usage de l'alcool parmi les chrétiens" that is "The debate on the use of alcohol among Christians", Paul Gosselin affirms that moderate use of alcohol is actually a biblical alternative and can be practiced without risk by a lot of the members of our congregations.⁶ He well understands that from a pastoral management point of view it is very tempting to clear up the issue by requiring total abstinence of church members, which can raise more or less problems, but it seems simplistic for a good reason. If the Bible provided the moderate use of alcohol it means

⁵ Meadors, "Abstain, Abstinence" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 10.

⁶ Paul Gosselin, "Le Débat sur l'Usage de l'Alcool parmi les Chrétiens" *SAMIZDAT*, <http://www.samizdat.qc.ca/vc/theol/alcool.htm> (accessed September 7, 2011).

that God has certainly provided the grace to support his servants in this way. He then commands that we put aside our denominational prejudices and see how this situation can be lived in practice. He suggests that we inquire from brothers and sisters in France and Germany to see how they live the abstinent – non-abstinent coexistence at home and that we avoid legalism.

The author goes further and suggests that Christian parents should teach their children the moderate use of alcohol at home so that growing up they could avoid the alcohol abuse in their lives. He puts it as follows:

In my opinion a very large proportion of alcohol abuse can be eliminated in a Christian environment where children learn, young enough to try at home under parental supervision (obviously) the moderate use of alcohol. Already they will recognize their 'limit' and know when to stop before it's too late. An individual thus equipped will know, I think, much better to control himself than one that has learned to drink with his pals in the 'party' of students, of office or in bars or taverns where abuse is overtly encouraged. In my view the introduction to the use of alcohol is a good paternal responsibility and may need to consider (in long term) a course or conference for fathers to do so. I presuppose here obviously that both parents know to control their alcohol use. If this is not the case, then no need to introduce children in this context.⁷

He believes, however, that the admission of the moderate use of alcohol will not solve every problem, but the Bible does not teach us to devise regulations in order to eliminate the problems of the human heart. It rather leads us to learn to apply the procedures laid down by Jesus himself in Matthew 18: 15-20 where cases of abuse arise and take them one by one!

⁷ Gosselin, "Le Débat sur l'Usage de l'Alcool parmi les Chrétiens" *SAMIZDAT*, <http://www.samizdat.qc.ca/vc/theol/alcool.htm> (accessed September 7, 2011).

Reflections on Gosselin's Article

To affirm that moderate use of alcohol is actually a biblical alternative and can be practiced without risk by a lot of the members of our congregations is an exaggeration. The situation we are experiencing in Chad my country shows the opposite. The Catholic Church leaders in the beginning of the Church in Chad have taught that moderate use of alcoholic beverages was fine. However, in practice, most of catholic Christians in Chad drink without moderation and often get drunk to the confusion of their leaders. Consequently, the problem of drunkenness with its negative effects is bigger among Catholics than among Protestants. In fact, protestant leaders taught total abstention that builds good habits in members' lives today even if some protestant Christians begin to drink despite the official position of Church in regard to alcoholic beverages.

I disagree with Gosselin when he suggests that Christian parents should teach their children to drink moderately in their homes so that growing up they will recognize their 'limit' and know when to stop before it's too late. Gosselin's suggestion is questionable on two counts. First, it assumes all people can practice moderation. Second, it does not take into consideration the rise in alcoholism in the USA since the repeal of prohibition 1933. Such an experience could work with a very few people but it is known that if one drinks one is likely to drink more. It is as Bacchiocchi writes,

In the early part of this century evangelical churches played a major role in influencing the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States on January 16, 1919, outlawing the "manufacture, sale or transportation" of alcoholic beverages. Since the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, however, most churches have abandoned their stand for total abstinence, encouraging "moderation" instead. Unfortunately, moderation has led over 18

million Americans to become immoderate drinkers, because alcohol is a habit-forming narcotic which weakens one's capacity for self-control.⁸

This habit-forming of alcohol is also confirmed by Hooton when he writes, "There is documentary evidence that young people who drink at home drink more away from home. Likewise, those coming from non-drinking homes are less likely to use alcoholic beverages when they are on their own."⁹

As a Christian parent I rather teach my children to refuse alcohol without apology, to learn to order soft drinks without feeling either pride or censure. Knowing the bad effects of alcohol on individuals, on their families, and on the societies, I am careful in not providing an atmosphere that would lead my children to drink. I teach them the right way and let them decide for their own when they grow up. Jesus said, "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin." (Luke 17:1, 2 NIV). The position of the Catholic Church in Chad has led many Christians to sin in regard to the use of alcoholic beverages. Because of the threat that this position represents to the spiritual growth of the Church, I conclude that avoidance of alcohol is a viable Christian alternative.

4. In his article "Le Vin, l'Alcool et le Chrétien" that is "Wine, Alcohol and Christian" (my translation), the author explores Bible verses both in the Old Testament and the New Testament to show how God warns his people against the excess of alcohol.

⁸ Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Wine in the Bible: a biblical study on the use of alcoholic beverages, a preview of wine in the Bible, http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/books/wine_in_the_bible/1.html (accessed August 16, 2011).

⁹ Caradine R. Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), 50.

For the child of God, his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and should be kept in check (Jas 3:2). He is called repeatedly to sobriety (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Titus 2: 2, 6; 1 Peter 4:7; 5:8) and not to be enslaved by anything (1 Corinthians 6:12). Too much wine can produce mockery (Proverbs 20:1) and gluttony impoverishes (Proverbs 23:21). He comes to the conclusion that abstinence was shown by men devoted to the Lord without being a law for the Christian. He states it as follows:

In summary, to be controlled by wine and strong drink leads to degradation, hardening of the heart, dissolute morals, degradation and slavery, and for those who are defeated. Sobriety is highly recommended by Holy Scripture. Abstinence is shown by men dedicated to the Lord (Num 6 and Jer. 35), without becoming a law for the Christian. In case of inability to stay sober, it is best abstaining completely. If you could offend someone, you must consider Rom. 14.¹⁰

Total Abstinence Point of View

Unlike supporters of moderate use of alcohol, some other believers hold that Christians should not drink alcohol. In other words total abstinence from alcoholic beverages is to be encouraged in Christian life.

1. *What Shall We Say about Alcohol* by Caradine R. Hooton is a thorough appeal for abstinence in regard to drinking alcoholic beverages. The author starts by asking the question, "What answers do the churches have for critical needs of cocktail community?"¹¹ Because preachers, teachers, and parents do have difficulties with the unsolved problems of drinking and abstinence, this book offers approaches and procedures which the author believes will be challenging and helpful.

¹⁰ Unknown author, "Le vin, l'alcool et le chrétien" http://www.bibliquest.org/Auteurs_divers/TaMi-Alcool.htm (accessed September 7, 2011).

¹¹ Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?*, 10.

The new approach consists first of presenting alcoholic beverages as antithetical to healthy Christian living. According to the author, abstinence is undoubtedly a desirable practice which makes possible a better understanding of God, a deeper appreciation of our fellow man, a more constructive social interrelatedness and satisfying investment of life.¹²

In this new approach, the study of motivations, in other words understanding why people drink is the second important element. Instead of looking only at the bad in others, one seeks to discover the potential good in all. Not content simply to deal with problems, one insists upon understanding people. Why do people drink? Are not the uses of alcoholic beverages symptoms of deeper needs which are not being more effectively met otherwise? Instead of merely damning the drink, one seeks an understanding of drives that, after all, can only be satisfied by something better than alcohol.

The third important feature in this new approach is "the skillful use of scientific facts."¹³ Modern laboratories have, through extensive research, developed an abundance of basic data that can be most helpful in promoting abstinence. There is no longer any excuse for unrealistic speculation about certain effects of drinking. The incontestable damage of ethyl alcohol to the thought processes, the nervous system, and muscular reaction is enough, when properly presented, to discourage experiments with drinking.

Along with the accurate presentation of facts is the need for strengthening faith. This is the fourth important element in this new approach. It consists of "giving theological and ethical support to temperance education."¹⁴ The pattern for good leadership can be developed only by persons who grow in faith as they gain knowledge

¹² Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* 18.

¹³ Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* 19.

¹⁴ Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* 20.

of facts. When the Bible says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1), one can prove both by facts and faith that it is true physically, socially, and spiritually.

The fifth important element in this new approach of alcohol education is "the communication of truth in more meaningful terms."¹⁵ Nowadays, people resent threats and reject the pietistic approach that asserts that "drinking is wrong" or "alcohol is a poison." A better beginning is to relate familiar facts with which others have some connection on the assumption that they have a concern and are able to make decisions. Modern individuals and audiences can understand better when one talks about drinking and driving, public health problems related to alcohol, efficiency in industry, or alcohol related arrests. They respect intelligent efforts to present scientific truths about the risks of drinking ethyl alcohol as contrasted with beneficial uses of commercial alcohol. The art of persuasion consists also in projecting these new understandings for the benefit of others. Effective communication can thus result in efficient promotion of abstinence.

In this era where the alcohol business intends to sell more intoxicants to an ever-expanding range of potential customers, including youth people, women, and children, Hooton suggests three strategies that Christians can use to protect themselves and others against the depredation of these allied liquor interests:

First, let Christians be sober. This means literally, "Be free from every form of mental and spiritual drunkenness, from excess, passion, confusion."¹⁶ As example of being sober,

A University of Pennsylvania student believed that a Christian should be sober in all circumstances. Asked by his imbibing fraternity brothers if he expected to

¹⁵ Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* 21.

¹⁶ Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* 41.

drink the spiked punch they would find at the forthcoming wedding party, he politely said, "No." When they wanted to argue the point, he suggested that the hostess would, in all good taste, likely provide non-intoxicants for all abstainers. "But if she doesn't, would you, by refusing a drink, pose as better than Christ who made wine at Cana?" In winsome reply, the heckled student said, "No, I'll always drink anything Jesus made out of water."¹⁷

Second, let Christians be vigilant, in other words let them be watchful. Peter, the apostle never forgot that when Christ needed them the disciples went to sleep. Now he admonished watchfulness, "Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Purveyors of liquor and those who profit from its sale and consumption spare no effort in pushing the trade. Offering increased revenue to communities, added employment to labor, higher salaries to teachers, support of charities, they plan long-range systems designed to soften resistance to their operations. While government leaders are preoccupied with important character-building projects and the promotion of better human relationships, they are "pressuring" legislatures and organizations that can give prestige and power to the liquor business.

Vigilance is needed to counterbalance these subtle infiltrations. It may take the form of electing good men to office, encouraging better law enforcement, informing people of the facts about drinking, and making alternatives for alcohol more appetizing and attractive. Active and vigorous opposition to all sanctions sought by the liquor business must be matched by Christian alertness to human needs and creativity in supplying proper solutions.

Third, resist this adversary, standing firm in the faith (1 Peter 5:9). Firmness does not mean insulting attack upon those who disagree with us, nor does our faith imply that

¹⁷ Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* 42.

resistance must always presuppose unfaithfulness by those who have another viewpoint.

"The type of opposition supplied by some reformers has not won friends and favorably influenced people. Culture patterns are not changed for the better by fanatics."¹⁸

Successful resistance can defeat the enemy in every community where Christians will prepare themselves with facts and faith, develop a creative concern for persons, render service without selfishness, support good laws and honest officers, and make the church a vital force in the community.

Reflections on Hooton

Hooton's book taught me a good approach of Christian counseling for alcoholics, especially when he suggests that we first seek to understand why people drink that means their real motivations then we can effectively meet their needs. Sometimes the use of alcoholic beverages is a symptom of hidden needs which are not being effectively met. Therefore, instead of merely condemning an alcoholic I must take time to speak with him and listen to him especially when he is lucid. By doing so I show him respect and as result he may open his mind and share with me his deeper needs that I can help him meet with something better than alcohol.

The book taught me also to be prepared with scientific data about negative effects of alcohol on an individual (brain damage, liver disease, heart disease, lung disease, stomach disease, pancreas disease, kidneys disease, weight gain, etc.), on the family (violence, divorce, shame, etc.), and on the society (traffic accidents, work accidents, violence, etc.). The art of persuasion requires that I video project scientific data about alcohol for a good understanding that can be transformed into special activities for the

¹⁸ Hooton, *What Shall We Say About Alcohol?* 43.

benefit of my audience. Indeed, with the abundance of basic data including statistics that we have today, there is no need for unrealistic speculation about certain effects of drinking.

Last, the Hooton's book taught me a firm resistance with love. In regard to the abstinence from alcohol beverages I do not need to be a fanatic, which means I do not need to oppose an insulting attack to those who disagree with me. Firm resistance with love, which is successful resistance requires that as a Christian, I develop a creative concern for needy people by providing them with better things than alcohol, I serve people without selfishness, I respect their viewpoint even if they disagree with me, and I support good laws in my community. I remember "dry cities" or "dry counties"¹⁹ in America where communities vote against the sale of alcoholic beverages, for example the city of Irving in Dallas, Texas where I learned English in 1998. Such law if voted in many countries can certainly make difference in positive way. It is obvious that in "dry counties" some people still drink alcohol but the restriction on its sale makes it harder for people to drink as much as they can as in "wet counties", which are non-prohibition areas.

2. *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept* by William H. Walker is another claim for abstinence as opposed to moderate use of alcoholic beverages. The author starts by

¹⁹ A dry county is a county in the United States whose government forbids the sale of alcoholic beverages. Hundreds of dry counties exist across the United States, almost all of them in the South. A number of smaller jurisdictions also exist, such as cities, towns and townships, which prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages. These are known as dry towns, dry cities or dry townships. Many dry communities do not prohibit the mere consumption of alcohol, which could potentially cause a loss of profits and taxes from the sale of alcohol to their residents in "wet" (non-prohibition) areas. The rationale for maintaining prohibition on the local level often is religious in nature, as many Protestant Christian denominations discourage the consumption of alcohol by their followers.

asking the real question that every Christian faces, "What is the will of God for me concerning the drinking of alcoholic beverages?"²⁰ Then he continues, "We know He does not want us to become alcoholics. Does He want us to drink moderately? Or does He want us to completely abstain from intoxicating drinks?"²¹ To these questions the author claims that the Bible commends sobriety. In 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 it is written,

So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Twice in this passage Paul, the apostle exhorted the believers in Thessalonica with the words "let us be sober," which from an accurate translation of the Greek text mean "let us be sober continually."²² Therefore, if God wants us to be sober continually, he does not want us to imbibe intoxicating drinks. He rather wants us to maintain a life of sobriety free from the evil influence of ethyl alcohol. This kind of life style is not an option for the Christian; it is an order from our Commander in Chief.

Unlike the supporters of moderate use of alcoholic beverages who understand "being sober" to mean "drinking moderately", Walker points to other verses where not only the bishops (1 Timothy 3:2), but also the wives of deacons (1 Timothy 3:11), and the older men (Titus 2:2) were exhorted to be sober. He then concludes, "Since God has only one standard of holy living, these clear commands can and should be applied to every Christian. The Bible leaves no room for believing in a double standard, one for the clergy or leaders and another for the laity."²³

²⁰ William H. Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept* (Kissimmee: William H. Walker, 1983), 7.

²¹ Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept*, 8.

²² Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept*, 9.

²³ Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept*, 16.

Also, Paul the apostle exhorts bishops not to be *addicted to wine* (Titus 1:7), deacons not to *indulge in much wine* (1 Timothy 3:8), and older women not to be *slaves to drink* (Titus 2:3). Unlike the holders of moderate use of alcohol who understand these expressions in italic to mean that bishops, deacons, and older women could drink some wine as long as they were not given to much wine, Walker claims that these verses speak of total abstinence. To anyone who argues, "If God had meant that they should drink no wine at all, he could have easily said that," Walker responds, "if God approved of their drinking moderately, he could easily have said that too."²⁴

To reinforce his view point, the author refers to Proverbs 20:1 "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." He comments the verse as follows,

This is the ugly picture which the Scriptures give of wine and strong drink. They are tools in the hands of Satan to lead multitudes away from God. Satan specializes in deceiving, as may be seen from the way he manipulated Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the same manner he is using alcoholic beverages to cause people to cast off all restraints and rush headlong into eternity without Christ and without hope. Even Christians are often trapped by an addiction to alcohol, which robs them of the joy of their salvation and power in prayer and testimony.²⁵

Furthermore, Paul the apostle exhorted the believers in Ephesus, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Unlike supporters of moderate drinking who conclude from this verse that it is permissible to drink alcoholic beverages so long as one does not drink excessively and become intoxicated, Walker understands it as supporting total abstinence. He suggests that this verse contains both a striking contrast and an enlightening comparison. The contrast is obviously between the wine, which deceives and leads astray, and the blessed

²⁴ Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept*, 24.

²⁵ Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept*, 17.

Holy Spirit of God. But there is also a similarity between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. It is a comparison of influence and control. When one imbibes ethyl alcohol in any form, he will invariably be influenced and controlled by it in some extent. In like manner, one who yields himself to the Holy Spirit will be influenced and controlled by the Spirit to the extent that he yields himself. He concludes, "Christian must make choice. He cannot be controlled by the Spirit of God, and at the same time yield himself to the influence and control of alcohol, even when taken in small quantities. Where should one draw the line? We believe that total abstinence is a biblical concept."²⁶

Reflections on Walker

Walker's book caused me to question about the real meaning of "being sober." Does the expression mean "moderate drink" or "total abstinence"? I looked in three dictionaries and found that "being sober" could mean "moderate drink" as well as "total abstinence."

According to the *Webster's Dictionary*, "being sober" means a) sparing in the use of food and drink, b) not addicted to intoxicating drink, and c) not drunk.²⁷ All these three meanings refer well to moderate drink.

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* adds to the moderate drink the idea of total abstinence at least at the end of its definition as follows,

The concept which underlines the verb *nêphô* "to be sober" and the whole word group is formally negative. It is the opposite of "intoxication" both in the literal sense of intoxication with wine, and in the figurative sense of state of spiritual

²⁶ Walker, *Total Abstinence: A Biblical Concept*, 27, 30.

²⁷ *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam Company, Publishers, 1970), 827.

intoxication attributable to other causes. In the literal sense, the usage is originally radical. A man is *nêphôn* who is at the time completely unaffected by wine.²⁸

According to the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, the Greek verb *nêphô* "to be sober" with its derivatives means to be free from drunkenness and every form of excess; hence to be calm, mild, collected, self-controlled, and even-tempered in mind and action (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; 1 Timothy 3:2, 11; 4:5; Titus 1:8; 2:2; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8).²⁹ Like the *Webster's Dictionary*, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* clearly refers to moderate drink.

Therefore, instead of being inflexible like Walker who wants sobriety to mean absolutely total abstinence from alcoholic beverages, I prefer to understand it as the fact of drinking little or no alcohol; is sober one who eats or drinks in moderation and, in particular, who drinks little alcohol. Such flexibility allows me to interpret Bible verses about alcohol consumption more accurately than being close minded. Also my inflexibility cannot stop people from drinking if they want to; rather it is my resistance in love as mentioned above that can touch lives and turn them away from alcohol.

3. *The Bible and Total Abstinence* by Rev. John Pyper is another advocacy for total abstinence based upon Bible interpretation according to the context and not merely according to definitions of terms. The author starts by exposing the false and establishing the true definition of the word "wine" in the Bible.

The false definition of wine is "the fermented juice of the grape," with the implication that all wine is fermented, alcoholic, and intoxicating.³⁰ According to this definition, all the sanction and praise bestowed upon wine in the Bible are interpreted as

²⁸ Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids: WM B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 936.

²⁹ *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, 1603.

³⁰ John Pyper, *The Bible and Total Abstinence* (Evanston: Sara C. Palmer, 1948), 20.

favorable to the manufacture, sale, and use of intoxicating drink in general; for, as the poison alcohol is the same in all intoxicating drinks, every argument in favor of alcoholic wine is necessarily favorable to alcoholic beverages of other names. Consequently, this false definition of wine represents the Bible as a self-contradictory book that on one hand praises the intoxicating drink and on the other hand condemns it. The supporters of this false definition assume, correctly enough, that according to Scripture the main use of the wine in the system of Providence is to produce wine, which is not true.

To Pyper, the true definition of wine according to Scripture usage is "the fruit of the vine or juice of the grape in any state, solid or liquid, unfermented or fermented, pure or mixed, wholesome or poisonous."³¹ In other words the Bible mentions wine sometimes as fermented and sometimes as unfermented, not always as "the fermented juice of the grape." It is the context of the text that helps the reader understand the meaning of the wine whether unfermented or fermented as it is mentioned. He reinforces his definition as follows,

The English word wine, therefore, is a generic term, equally applicable to the juice of the grape in a good state or a bad state, an unintoxicating state or an intoxicating state. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *yayin*, which occurs 141 times in the Old Testament, the Greek word *oinos*, which occurs 33 times in the New Testament, or the Latin word *vinum*, all of which are generic terms. It is therefore, always from the context, and never from the word *yayin*, *oinos*, or *wine* itself, that the character of the wine alluded to in any particular text can be determined. If the context shows the wine mentioned to be God-given or used with Divine approval, then we are sure it is unintoxicating (non-poisonous) and good; but if the context condemns or warns against the wine referred to, either by command, declaration, or narration of evil resulting from its use, then we know it was intoxicating (poisonous) and bad. And this is no novel or unusual principle of Scripture interpretation; on the contrary, it is the principle universally adopted by those who rightly divide the word of Truth, in the exposition of such generic terms as spirit, angel, man, woman, husband, wife, parent, child, son, daughter, brother, sister, king, prince, judge, principality, power, peace, temptation, house, herb, food, bread, milk, oil, water, and scores of other words. When this common-

³¹ Pyper, *The Bible and Total Abstinence*, 24.

sense, essential canon of sound interpretation is intelligently and fairly applied to the question of Bible wines, there is not a single text in the sacred volume, in which these three things can be found together – (1) intoxicating wine, (2) its use by man, and (3) with Divine approval. Intoxicating wine is frequently described, condemned, and warn against but never once authorized or commended, in the Word of God. All Bible commendations of wine are restricted to the fruit of the wine or juice of the grape in its natural, innocent, nutritive, non-intoxicating state. "God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one" (James 1:13).³²

To demonstrate that the teaching of the Bible is ascertained to be that of uncompromising total abstinence, Pyper applied his principle to Jesus' first miracle, recorded in John 2:1-11 when he turned water into wine at Cana wedding. To the author, the belief that Jesus turned innocent water into intoxicating (poisoning) wine, is a mere assumption without any foundation in the sacred narrative, when carefully examined. He made wine, but was it intoxicating or unintoxicating? The record does not say which; but it does not need to say when the plain fact is taken into account, that intoxicating or unintoxicating simply means poisonous or wholesome. The Greek word translated "wine" in the passage is *oinos* which is the equivalent of the Hebrew *yayin* of the Old Testament. As mentioned above, the Hebrew *yayin*, the Greek *oinos*, the Latin *vinum*, or the English *wine* are generic terms, which, are equally applicable to the juice of the grape in the natural, unfermented, unintoxicating state, and in the artificial, fermented, and intoxicating condition.

Finally, Pyper appeals to the truth that the Bible does not contradict itself to justify his principle of interpreting Bible verses based upon the context rather than focusing on definitions of terms. Suppose the wine Jesus made at Cana wedding to have been intoxicating, it would contradict what Habakkuk had written under God's inspiration, "Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink of the cup of his wrath, and

³² Pyper, *The Bible and Total Abstinence*, 24-25.

makes them drunk, to gaze on their shame!" (Habakkuk 2:15; cf. Proverbs 20:1; 23:31).

"Scripture would thus be set against Scripture, the Old Testament against the New, the Prophets against the Apostles, and the Holy Ghost against the Son of God!"³³

Reflections on Pyper

Pyper's principle of interpreting Bible verses based upon the context rather than focusing on definitions of terms presents two weaknesses and a strength.

First, Pyper seems to minimize the value of dictionaries and encyclopedias who give definitions of words and expressions, so people can use them appropriately. When *the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, the *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, and the Bauer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* define the words *yayin* and *oinos* as the usual words for the fermented juice of the grape and are generally rendered "wine" in RSV and KJV, Pyper retorts that this is a false definition. He comes with his own definition of wine that is the fruit of the vine or juice of the grape in any state, solid or liquid, unfermented or fermented, pure or mixed, wholesome or poisonous. Apparently, this definition is good to be used with flexibility. Unfortunately Pyper classifies all positive references to wine as indicating unfermented wine and all negative references to wine as indicating fermented wine.

Second, Pyper exaggerates with his principle especially when he holds that intoxicating wine is frequently described, condemned, and warn against but never once authorized or commended, in the Word of God. And that all Bible commendations of wine are restricted to the fruit of the wine or juice of the grape in its natural, innocent, nutritive, non-intoxicating state.

³³ Pyper, *The Bible and Total Abstinence*, 33.

We have noticed that there are some positive references to wine in the Bible such as: a) wine as a tithe (Genesis 14:18), b) wine as refreshment (2 Samuel 16:1-2), c) wine to improve a sad mood (Psalms 104:14-15), d) wine to help digestion (Isaiah 25: 6), and e) wine for medical purpose (Luke 10:34; 1 Timothy 5:23). In all these references the words *yayin* and *oinos* should be understood as the unfermented juice of the grape according to Pyper. If this is true, can one pour grape juice on a wound? Of course not! It is fermented wine that provides sufficient alcoholic content to serve as antiseptic according to Rowe mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

Besides these weaknesses, I see Pyper's appeal to the truth that the Bible does not contradict itself as strength. I agree with him that if Jesus changed water into intoxicating wine for people to drink at Cana wedding some of them who drank too much would get drunk and that would be in contradiction with Habakkuk's statement, "Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink of the cup of his wrath, and makes them drunk, to gaze on their shame!" (Habakkuk 2:15; cf. Proverbs 20:1; 23:31). Fortunately, John's record of this first miracle does not give all these details.

4. *Alcohol and Christian Ethics* by T. G. Dunning is a clear explanation of what Christian ethic means in regard to the questions and problems of temperance or abstinence from alcoholic beverages. To the author, Christian Ethic is not a moral code. It is God becoming man in the Person of Christ to reveal His life, to die for the sin of man and to impart His life for the generation of man.³⁴ With this in mind a Christian should not expect moral commands because they are entirely secondary. The truth of this is that the law was given by Moses, and the many definitions and interpretations were a burden

³⁴ Dunning, *Alcohol and Christian Ethics*, 23.

to the people. Moreover those who were assumed to have kept the law, at least outwardly, the Pharisees, were a poor approval of it. Therefore, one should not take to the New Testament a modern problem such as what percentage of alcohol in a beverage constitutes an intoxicant and expect a precise solution. Jesus himself had not answered such question and Christians should not expect him to answer all their modern questions. The author reminds that the New Testament gives Christians not a text-book on ethics but a Gospel and that, valuable as text-books are, our social evils require for their remedy something much deeper and more personal.

To make his thought clear, Dunning highlights that the deep significance of the gospels for temperance lies not only in the explicit references to intoxicants, but also in some great spiritual principles governing personal life and social responsibility. These principles are so explicitly stated in the New Testament, so relevant to the issue of temperance and so challenging to every Christian.³⁵

First, Law and Grace: "The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17). The distinction is fundamental. Love is the fulfillment of law. Yet those who value a rigid adherence to the externals of the law may make themselves the real enemies of grace. Jesus did not break the law but he transcended it. He would not allow himself to be made a judge or divider in dispute (Luke 12:14). However it was obvious that he was touching springs of life beyond the reach of rule and regulation. These have their value but they are inadequate as goal of life. That means even if rules are to be formulated for discipline, their secondary value should always be recognized. Therefore, the temperance which the New Testament commends is the fruit of the Spirit and not a blind adherence to a moral code.

³⁵ Dunning, *Alcohol and Christian Ethics*, 42.

Second, Inwardness of Religion: God looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). Jesus said that the pure in heart shall see God (Matthew 5:8). To encourage immoral desires is to commit what in reality is adultery. That means the value of the outer is determined by its inner origins. Yet Jesus was among men as one who served and was known as one who went to do good things. He sees little value in the worship of the lip when the heart is far from him. As the author puts it, "He came not to supplement or reduce ascetic practices as such but, among others things, to lift self-denial into a new context and make it not a goal in itself but a means to a spiritual end."³⁶ Therefore mere abstinence from any evil such as alcohol beverages can never become to him an ultimate value. For the significance of the absence of any act of evil derives entirely from the context of the inner life. Paul the apostle was convinced that though he gave his body to be burned and had not charity it would profit him nothing (1 Corinthians 13:3).

Third, The negative and positive aspects of life: The early church recognized lordship to Jesus in virtue of what he did not do but of what he did. When asked to justify his claims, he quoted his deeds not his abstention from customary evils, although he was free to do so. For example he provided wine for the wedding feast (John 2:1-11), he allowed oil to be poured upon him (Matthew 26:7), and at last he drank a simple refreshing vinegar beverage (Matthew 27:48). He was critical of the negative goodness of the Pharisees. The Priest and Levite did no moral wrong but they evaded a positive goodness their situation required (Luke 10:31-32). Nothing evil is recorded of the rich man but he was sent to a place of torment because he rendered no service to the poor Lazarus at his gate (Luke 16:19-31).

³⁶ Dunning, *Alcohol and Christian Ethics*, 56.

All these examples should help Christians to learn how dangerous it is to only concentrate on an abstention from a moral evil. We overcome evil not by an analysis of it but by doing good things to God's glory.

Reflections on Dunning

Dunning's book teaches me three great principles that will help me build up the virtue of acceptance in my Christian life.

First, it teaches me to avoid placing primary emphasis on legal principles such as "Do not handle, do not taste, and do not touch," which is legalism, but to value the grace of God and to live my temperance with love as the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned"

(Luke 6:37). Paul the apostle wrote about legalism in these terms,

Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"? All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence (Col 2: 16, 17, 20-23).

As Christian I do not need to value a rigid adherence to the externals of the law and make myself the real enemy of grace. In other words, I must be careful not to judge others over what they eat or drink but to show them with love through my practical way of doing good things how they can live a life that pleases God. As Jesus said, "... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Second, it teaches me to watch more over my inner life than over my outward appearance; for "man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Being the pure in heart rather than focusing on outward appearance is what pleases God; for Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8). Indeed, mere abstinence from alcoholic beverages without love does not make someone holy to God.

Third, it teaches me to make the most of every opportunity the Lord grants to me serve him and serve others by doing good things to his glory. The temptation often is to waste my time arguing with my opponents over the issues of alcohol drinking, knowing that they will not agree with me and that I will not agree with them. Such discussions often are worthless. This is why Paul warned Titus to "avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless" (Titus 3:9). Instead of arguing with my opponents, Jesus commends me to let my light shine before others, so that they may see my good works and give glory to my Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). That means they may be led to salvation.

5. *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction* by Ebbe Curtis Hoff is an advocacy for the recognition of alcohol as drug, not merely as beverage, and treating it as such. The author starts by revealing that "Most people, who use alcoholic beverages, especially in a moderate, responsible way, hardly think of their drinking as a form of drug taking."³⁷ To him, there is misconception about alcohol that needs to be denounced. The public

³⁷ Ebbe Curtis Hoff, *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), 3.

concern in drug abuse such as marijuana, LSD³⁸ and heroin is praiseworthy and necessary, but not to the neglect of alcohol problems. People must remember that alcohol too is a drug, and alcohol problems are indeed the most serious and wide-spread of all drug abuse.

There are many people today who seek to find in drugs profound and inspirational experiences. Some believe that these uplifting explorations result in superior insights and better understanding of the self. Such drug experiences range from marijuana, a relatively soft drug, to LSD, a much stronger one. There are also a number of other drugs that powerfully affect the mind, elevating the mood, subduing undesirable emotions, and calling forth quite profound changes in the way in which the mind deals with reality. The drug alcohol is similarly used in an attempt to expand the mind and to intensify internal experiences.

Unlike many supporters of moderate use of alcohol who are immature in their thoughts, Hoff recognizes a good side of alcohol, yet he points it as a drug that can harm its users dangerously. He describes it as follows,

It is true that alcohol can be called a "beverage" when consumed moderately in beer, wine, spirits, or mixed drinks. Indeed, it can even be classified as a food in the sense that it can, in a limited way, supply energy to the body. But when we begin to think of alcohol as a drug, we find ourselves concerned about uses that take on a greater or lesser degree of abnormality. Even in a social setting, in which many feel that alcoholic beverages are not only harmless but also may serve to enhance the interpersonal relationships of an attractive life, the fact

³⁸ LSD or Lysergic Acid Diethylamide is one of the most potent mood-changing chemicals. It was discovered in 1938 and is manufactured from lysergic acid, which is found in ergot, a fungus that grows on rye and other grains. Is sold in tablets, capsules, and, occasionally, liquid form; thus, it is usually taken orally. LSD is often added to absorbent paper, which is then divided into decorated pieces, each equivalent to one dose. The experiences, often referred to as "trips," are long; typically, they end after about 12 hours. Sensations and feelings change much more dramatically than the physical signs in people under the influence of LSD. The user may feel several different emotions at once or swing rapidly from one emotion to another. If taken in large enough doses, the drug produces delusions and visual hallucinations. (Source: <http://drugabuse.gov/infofacts/hallucinogens.html>).

remains that a person who downs five highballs or as many cocktails within a couple of hours does become intoxicated and shows unmistakable disturbance of bodily functions and emotional expression. Whether he knows it or not, alcohol is affecting him *as a drug*. And we do know enough today to realize that people, who, for one reason or another, employ alcohol seriously as a psychoactive drug are setting themselves on a dangerous course.³⁹

The author's real concern about alcohol use comparing to other kinds of drug use, however, is that alcohol use is culturally approved, whereas certain drug users are regarded as abnormal and are punishable as illegal. Sale of alcohol is legally controlled, and alcohol may be consumed without breaking law; whereas marijuana, LSD and heroin are illegal, and those who use them are subject to prosecution.⁴⁰

On one hand, those who oppose alcohol consumption do so for variety of reasons among others: 1) drinking is sinful or immoral; 2) drinking is bad for the health; 3) drinking upsets family life, work efficiency, and community welfare; 4) drinking leads to alcoholism; and 5) drinking causes traffic and industrial accidents. For these reasons, many people believe that for the good of society and of individuals the production and sale of alcoholic beverages should be forbidden by law or carefully restricted and that people be warned and encouraged not to drink.

On the other hand, those who believe that alcohol may serve a good purpose show up with many justifications among others: 1) moderate and responsible use of alcohol in small amounts does not harm the individual or society; 2) it is drunkenness which is sinful or immoral, drinking in itself is not; 3) the disturbances resulting from drunkenness are committed by a small number of offenders; 4) alcoholism is not caused by alcohol only; and 5) the decision to drink or not to drink should be made by the individual and not determined by law.

³⁹ Hoff, *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction*, 5.

⁴⁰ Hoff, *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction*, 12.

Another group however is constituted of many who accept drinking whose views are extremely naïve with poor consideration.

In the above list of justifications offered by those who believe that alcohol may serve a good purpose, there are expressions "moderate use" and "small amounts." Of course people who decide not to drink at all do not face the problem of the definition of "moderate use" or "small amounts" but for those who do sincerely believe that there is a right and proper use of alcohol, Hoff recommends that they have to find out what they mean by these expressions, since alcohol is attractive and when people start to drink sometimes it is not easy to draw the line between what is "moderate" or "little amounts" and what is not

Finally, the author supposes that there are any reliable figures as to the number of people who get drunk each day or each year in the United States or in other countries of the world. He knows something, however, about the number of drunkenness offenders who are apprehended by police, and the figures are large. Therefore he suggests that public disapproval of drunken behavior may well be an essential control in preventing or reducing occurrence of alcoholism and other forms of problem drinking.⁴¹

Reflections on Hoff

Hoff has an objective appreciation on alcohol use. Unlike other abstainers, he recognizes its good effect that it supplies energy to the body. Indeed, many people drink alcohol for this purpose, as food. This is what many poor people in my country said when they cannot afford to pay for healthy food; they decide to follow their friends in taverns

⁴¹ Hoff, *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction*, 17.

and drink grain alcohol with less percentage of alcohol and even distilled beverages that contain a very high percentage of alcohol.

Yet Hoff points out that alcohol is drug that can harm dangerously. And this is what is seen in day to day life when one looks objectively at alcohol abuse and its negative effects on the drinker, on his family, and on the society. This is why the Bible says,

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long
at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine
when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; At
the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper (Pro 23:29-32 NKJ).

6. *Drinking: a Christian Position* by Arnold B. Come is an attempt of understanding and seeking a solution to the alcohol problem from a Christian perspective. The author recognizes that there are two basic facts Christians are to deal with: 1) Drinking is an established and practiced custom for almost two thirds of our society and the percentage of drinkers in the total population will probably increase in years to come. 2) At the same time drinking, whether little or much, clearly exposes man to diverse dangers at every level of his being: physiological, psychological, and spiritual, in interpersonal relations, in the conduct of his work. And in many cases drinking either contributes to or directly causes great damage to individual and society.⁴²

Moreover, these facts mean that the basic problem is twofold: 1) is it possible to arrive at a positive appreciation as to why men drink in our society, so that it is understandable why even highly cultured, well-adjusted, seriously ethical and spiritual human beings continue to drink? 2) How can men indulge in drinking so as to experience

⁴² Come, *Drinking: a Christian Position*, 31.

its pleasurable and beneficial (if any) effects, yet so as to avoid the danger and damage that threatens every aspect of their being as a result of their drinking? And the corollary that is just as important: How can a nondrinker survive in a drinking society without giving in to the constant pressure to drink, and, at the same time, without alienating himself from the dominant social and business world that drinks?

The answers to these questions are not easy but the author hopes that the Christian understanding of man will be best able to put the problem of alcohol in its proper perspective, and also that the Christian spiritual resource of faith in God will be the most adequate resource of motivating power for the personal and social resolution of the alcohol problem. Although the full answer to the twofold question posed must call for knowledge from every sphere of human wisdom: biology, psychology, sociology, politics, economics, moral philosophy, and religion, the Christian faith brings a unique contribution to man as he seeks answers to the questions about alcohol. Christian truth certainly is not the whole truth, but it claims to be the central and decisive truth about man before God in the midst of this world. It offers a special insight concerning the nature of man, and this insight has implications for every other sphere of man's study of himself. In inseparable unity with this insight, Christian faith also consists of a living dependence upon the moving power of God to enable man to live in the light of this new self-understanding. The author compares Christian faith with the program of Alcoholics Anonymous⁴³ as he explains,

Like the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, Christian faith is "religious" in the general sense of that term: man is bid to look to a Power greater than man himself. But in contrast with AA, Christian faith is not *generally* religious. The Christian knows himself to have been approached and grasped by this Power in

⁴³ Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

and through a specific human form: Jesus of Nazareth. God thus makes himself known as One with a specific character and as One with a definite purpose for man's life and destiny. Christian faith with therefore speak to these basic questions about drinking from the vantage point of its own understanding of God and man.⁴⁴

One has expected that man would automatically do that which he had been convinced was right and good. But Paul's description of the general ethical condition of man is recognized by most as giving the true picture: "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:19, 24). The long sad experience of the human race has been that men enjoy doing things that are evil. For the sake of immediate pleasure they continue to do that which they know will eventually destroy the well-being of their own persons and of society.

In Christian ethic, however, there is a dependence on God in the Christian life, just as there is a dependence on alcohol in certain kinds of alcoholism, or just as there is a dependence of others on external legal or social force in order to control their drinking. Christian faith, therefore, places man in a relation to God and his fellowman that is able truly to heal man of the sickness of soul that gives birth to and sustains so much alcoholism. But even more important for the vast majority of men, Christian faith not only tells a man what he ought to do – drink or not drink – but it also gives him the spiritual power to do it. That means, to do it within the unique limits of his own character and circumstances so as not to bring damage upon himself or others. That means, to do it within the limits of freedom in love because love does not seek to crush or devour but accepts and sets free the other person to be and to become his own unique self.

⁴⁴ Come, *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction*, 32-33.

What is then the ethical Christian direction of life? The author recognizes that the answer to this question is not easy. For example, where would one go in the Bible to find a rule on drinking? Obviously, the drinking of wine was accepted without reflection throughout Biblical history (Psalms 104:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:23). On the other hand, drunkenness is everywhere condemned as a sign of godlessness (Isaiah 28:3, 7; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:21). Does this mean that the simple solution to the alcohol problem is to take these beverages as the good gift of God's creation and, of course, follow the rule of "moderation"? The author decides that this is no Christian solution at all, as Paul clearly says, "self-control" is not the result of following a rule of moderation but is a "fruit of Spirit" (Galatians 5: 22-23).⁴⁵

Reflections on Come

Come's attempt to understand and seek a solution to the alcohol problem from a Christian perspective results in focusing on Christian faith as the key to the solution. As he suggests Christian faith not only tells a man what he ought to do (drink or not drink) but it also gives him the spiritual power to do it. Indeed, the spiritual power comes from God in whom the Christian trusts and abides; for without God's enabling power man can do nothing good in God's sight. This is what Jesus illustrated when he said, "I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Thus, Christian faith added to the spiritual power enables man to resist the alcohol abuse within the limits of freedom in love because love always looks for what is good not only for the Christian himself but also for his neighbor.

⁴⁵ Come, *Alcoholism: the Hidden Addiction*, 68.

Nevertheless, Come suggests that the ethical Christian direction of life in regard to alcohol drink should not be the rule of "moderation" but "self-control." This caused me to look for the difference between moderation and self-control. Are they not synonymous?

Moderation is defined in the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* as "the limitation of one's appetite, actions, or emotions."⁴⁶ The word usually refers to being temperate, meaning that one does not go to excess even in normal habits such as eating. It appears only in the New Testament in Philippians 4:5. The Greek word *epieikes* is translated "forbearance" in ASV and RSV, "gentleness" in NRS, and "moderation" in KJV.

Self-control, however is defined in the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* under the word "temperance" as "an outgrowth of the Spirit's work in the believer"⁴⁷ (Galatians 5:22-23). The Greek word *egkrateia* signifies moderation, continence, or self-restraint, especially curbing one's impulses for the sake of worthier ends (1Corinthians 9:7, RSV; cf. 7:5). In Galatians 5:23 it is translated "self-control in ASV, RSV, NRS, NKJ, and "temperance" in KJV. The biblical usage of the term suggests self-crucifixion and submitting to control by the indwelling Spirit.

A careful comparison of these two words shows that although they are synonymous, there is a fine distinction that must be maintained. Whereas moderation can be made possible by man's own will and effort (for example a non-believer can exercise moderation), self-control can be made possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit, as the fruit of the Spirit or the Spirit's work in the believer (Galatians 5:23). In other

⁴⁶ *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, 1146.

⁴⁷ *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, 1672.

words, both believer and non-believer can exercise moderation, but only a believer can exercise self-control in biblical sense of the term.

7. *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink* by Irving Woodworth Raymond is a survey of what Jesus, Paul the apostle, and the apostolic fathers have taught or said about the use of wine and strong drink. The author points out that the references in the Gospels to all aspects of drinking are surprisingly meager and then he concludes that all wines referred to were fermented.⁴⁸ Wine appears with bread as part of the ordinary meal, mixed with water as the usual drink of festive celebrations and religious feasts, mingled with oil as a healing agent, and with myrrh as a tranquilizer. At the institution of the Lord's Supper wine was chosen as one of the sacrificial elements. Although much discussion and controversy have been aroused over the nature of this wine, it is important to conclude that all the wines used in basic religious services in Palestine were fermented. The wine used in this particular instance must therefore be regarded as fermented. Moreover, the author presents Jesus as drinking wine and approving the use of it,

Jesus Christ undoubtedly followed the usual customs of His days and drank wine at daily meals and at different kinds of celebrations. For proof of his assertion there is direct evidence both from what others said of Him and from what He Himself actually did. In contrast to St. John the Baptist, "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber..." (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34). As one of the guests at the marriage feast in Cana he miraculously changed water into wine (John 2:1-11), and at the Last Supper He chose wine as one of the vehicles for the transmission of His Divine life to man (Matt 26:27-29; Mark 15:23-25; Luke 22:20). These references constitute sufficient grounds, it would seem, to assert that not only did Jesus Christ Himself

⁴⁸ Irving Woodworth Raymond, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 80.

use and sanction the use of wine but also that he saw nothing intrinsically evil in wine.⁴⁹

Further, Woodworth nuances his position by recognizing that Jesus, however, saw evil consequences resulting from the improper use of wine. Drunkenness was probably rather a vice of the wealthy and consequently he probably did not meet with it frequently. Nevertheless, the few instances in which Christ spoke directly of drunkenness are implied in very severe language: "But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare" (Luke 21:34). In the parable of the evil stewards who abuse their position and who live a violent and drunken life, Christ warns of the heavy punishments set aside for such evil conduct: "the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth" (Matthew 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-48).

As for temperance or self-control, Woodworth mentions that there do not appear to be direct references to it in the Gospels. But the very life of Jesus Christ was the perfect embodiment of this virtue. From his youth in Galilee to his death on the cross he exhibited perfect self-control. In the Sermon on the Mount he developed the ideal of self-mastery in all manner of expression in thought, word and deed. It may therefore be said that he taught temperance by his example and that he established a standard of self-control which is the ideal that man should strive to attain. Then the author applies this to the Christian life as follows,

Since God has willed that we strive for perfection and that we become members of His Kingdom, we must renounce and abstain from whatever hinders our

⁴⁹ Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 81.

vocation. Everything must yield to the Divine call. Thus if the deadly grip of habitual drunkenness can only be relaxed and removed through total abstinence, then total abstinence is the necessary course of action to adopt, for drunkenness clearly produces consequences which bar the gates of Heaven (Luke 12:45-47 cf. 1 Cor 6:10; Gal 5:19-21). The second part of the great commandment is equally sweeping in its demands. "Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men do unto you, do you even so unto them." "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt 7:12; 22:39). In relation to the ethics of drinking, the implication of this commandment would do for us and do for him what we would do for ourselves. Thus if our example of total abstinence would help our neighbor in his battle against drink, then in the interests of Christian fellowship and Divine Love we should forsake the drinking of intoxicating liquor. Although some have objected to this interpretation, yet it is precisely on these grounds that later generations have forsaken wine and strong drink. From the days of the Early Church to the present, an increasing number have yielded to the call of the higher morality and given up the use of intoxicating liquors for the benefit of their weaker brothers.⁵⁰

Next to the Gospels the most important books of the New Testament for this study are the epistles of Paul. According to the Woodworth, St. Paul regards wine as intrinsically good, "for every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 4:4). Especially does Paul approve the common medicinal use of wine. He advises Timothy to "no longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1 Timothy 5:23). It is the improper use of wine and not its intrinsic character that induces evil consequences.

Paul the apostle, however, regards drunkenness as a very serious offense, since drunkenness bars the entrance to the Kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:19-21). Drunkenness also constitutes a profanation of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and a vice which negatively affects the whole Church, for the whole Body suffers if any part is injured (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). So detestable does Paul view this vice that he does not want Christians even to associate with drunkards (1 Corinthians 5:11).

⁵⁰ Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 83-84.

As for temperance or self-control, it occupies an important position in Paul's thought. He regards it as the antithesis of drunkenness and frequently describes the virtue in athletic terms. "He is the temperate man, according to the apostle, who holds himself well in hand, who meets temptation as a disciplined army meets the shock of battle, by skill and alertness and temperate courage, baffling the forces that threaten it."⁵¹ Like other virtues, temperance is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). As a Christian virtue, temperance according to Woodworth means control and discipline of the body rather than the suppression and rooting-up of the passions, and is exercised not only for one-self but also for others.⁵² Although this virtue is characteristic of all Christians, Paul stresses temperance as the particular qualification of all bishops and deacons (1 Timothy 3:2, 8).

In addition to the Gospels and the epistles of Paul, the allusions to drinking in the apostolic fathers both eastern and western deserve attention. The apostolic fathers constantly stress the fact that the Christian life is different from the life of the ordinary man. The Christian is commonly pictured as an athlete struggling in the race-course of life to win an incorruptible crown. Whatever helps him in this struggle is commended and whatever hinders his success is warned against. There is, therefore, a steady praise of temperance or self-control and a corresponding denunciation of drunkenness.⁵³ One leads along the way of light to Heaven, the other along the way of darkness to destruction.⁵⁴ The author quotes a fragment which is paralleled in form and thought in Greek poems to illustrate how the Eastern fathers describe the progressive consequences of drinking:

⁵¹ Findlay, quoted by Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 87.

⁵² Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 87.

⁵³ Polycarp referred to by Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 89.

⁵⁴ Barnabas referred to by Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 89.

From wine and drunkenness nine kinds of harms and sins arise. First, that one becomes out of his senses. Second, that one becomes sad. Third, that he becomes remorseful. Fourth, that he becomes foolish-talking. Fifth, that he becomes fearful of falling. Sixth, he sees retribution... (The text is broken here as well as in the seventh). Eighth, that he becomes lustful and shameless...⁵⁵

In the same manner the author quotes Ambrose to illustrate what the Western fathers think of drunkenness and its consequences:

Drunkenness affects the whole body. The senses especially suffer harm. If drunkards see a dog, they think they see a lion and flee. A murmur in their ears is like the crashing of waves at sea or of waves upon the shore. Bloodless pallor pours into their faces. Their muscles fail to function naturally and when they try to walk they wobble badly. Their passions are inflamed and cannot be held in check. Drunkenness is the fomentor of lust and under its influence men become like beasts. Physical violence is also a usual companion of drunkenness. Quarrels, weapons and the spilling of blood are present where wine is drunk to excess. The mind is no longer able to maintain its proper balance.⁵⁶

Reflections on Woodworth

Woodworth's position in regard to alcohol drink is well balanced and can be used as model of flexibility versus the rigid position of some Christians. On one hand, he affirms that it is the improper use of wine and not its intrinsic character that induces evil consequences. That means wine in itself is not evil if one drinks it with self-discipline. On the other hand, he recognizes that drinking wine can lead to drunkenness with its consequences, which bar the gates of Heaven. Thus, he is ready to adopt total abstinence if this is the way to remove the deadly grip of habitual drunkenness, and if this would help his neighbor win his battle against drink.

⁵⁵ Müller quoted by Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 95.

⁵⁶ Ambrose quoted by Woodworth, *The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink*, 119.

Such a flexibility that causes a Christian to voluntarily refrain from alcohol drinking in the interests of Christian fellowship and divine love is a good example to imitate.

Two Responses to Alcohol

Besides the moderate view on the use of alcoholic beverages and the total abstinence point of view, it is important to mention two responses to alcohol, one with Christian perspective and another with non-Christian perspective.

1. A Christian Response to Alcohol: *The Twelve Steps for Christians*.

According to this book, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) began on June 10, 1935, co-founded by William Griffith Wilson known as Bill W. and Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith known as Dr. Bob.⁵⁷ Wilson received the idea of Alcoholics Anonymous while he was hospitalized for excessive drinking in December 1934. During his hospital stay, Wilson had a spiritual experience that removed his desire to drink. Later he tried to persuade other alcoholics to stop drinking just as he had. The first alcoholic he found was Smith who was willing to follow Wilson's method to find freedom from alcoholism. Four years later, Wilson and Smith published the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, which contains the Twelve Steps and a spiritually based program of recovery for alcoholism.

Various sources influenced the formulation of AA's program, as developed and recorded by Wilson. Of these, the British-born Oxford Group movement contributed most significantly to the Christian basis of Alcoholics Anonymous. Both Wilson and Smith attended the Oxford Group meetings early in the 1920s and 1930s and based much of the AA program on this framework.

⁵⁷ *The Twelve Steps for Christians* (Curtis, Washington: RTI Publishing, 1994), xix.

Following are the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and their related Bible verses:⁵⁸

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable (Romans 7:18).
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity (Philippians 2:13).
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him* (Romans 12:1).
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves (Lamentations 3:40).
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs (James 5:16a).
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character (James 4:10).
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings (1 John 1:9).
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all (Luke 6:31).
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others (Matthew 5:23-24).
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it (1 Corinthians 10:12).
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out (Colossians 3:16a).

⁵⁸ *The Twelve Steps for Christians*, xi. For instance, we simply list the Twelve Steps and their related Bible verse. In the next chapter we will develop each of them along with its related Scripture.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs (Galatians 6:1).

Those who wrote *The Twelve Steps for Christians* did it for the purpose of solving the problems of alcoholics. They believe that Scripture and the Twelve Steps are important healing tools. It is their conviction that if Christians regularly apply these tools to their lives, they open themselves to God's healing love and grace. Thus healing is possible.

The book is a personal guide to understanding the spiritual power of the Twelve Steps from a Christian perspective. The material is primarily for adults whose childhoods were negatively influenced by substance abuse, emotional problems, or compulsive behaviors. The Twelve Steps offer a way to grow beyond the harmful effects of a troubled home environment. The book is a tool for developing one's personal journey toward recovery. It brings together the tested wisdom of Bible truths and the proven effectiveness of Twelve-Step principles. The material encourages self-understanding and emphasizes the unchanging love of God for all humanity. The use of Scripture provides an understanding of the Twelve Steps within a biblical context. When used as intended, the steps are a profoundly powerful process for allowing God to heal damaged emotions. In other words, they are a spiritual tool that helps Christians to regain balance and order, and leads them to improved health and increased happiness through a renewed relationship with God. Since the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935, the Twelve Steps have become a way for millions of people to change the course of their lives.

Reflections on the Twelve Steps for Christians

The Twelve Steps for Christians is a practical Christian response to the problem of alcohol, a powerful program of recovery for alcoholism. The strength of the program comes not only from the Twelve Steps themselves, but especially from God to whom nothing is impossible including the healing from alcoholism. Using the Twelve Steps along with their related Bible verses helps alcoholics to open themselves to God's healing love and grace. As they renew their relationship with God through the program, they can improve their health and increase their happiness. Indeed, with God the healing can go beyond the alcohol problem for a non-believer and win the whole person to eternal salvation.

Since Alcoholics Anonymous use the Twelve Steps with success in many countries, I plan to communicate them to some pastors in Chad my country, so they can use them as healing tools for those who struggle with alcohol in their congregations. I will write more about the program in the next chapter.

2. A non-Christian response to alcohol: *Al-Anon Family Group*.

Al-Anon is a fellowship of men, women, and children who, unlike Alcoholics Anonymous who seek to solve the problems of alcoholics, aim to help themselves and others to live with the problem of alcoholism.⁵⁹ Although Al-Anon has its roots in AA and is closely associated with it, it is generally understood that Al-Anon's primary purpose is not to try to stop alcoholics from drinking but to help those who have been

⁵⁹ *Al-Anon Family Groups* (New-York: Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc, 1989), 74, 75.

affected by that drinking lead saner, happier, and productive lives.⁶⁰ There are also meetings called Alateen for younger members.

Although Al-Anon do not work with Christian perspective like AA, they help families of alcoholics by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA themselves, by encouraging and understanding their alcoholic relatives and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.

A generation ago wives and husbands of alcoholics struggled for years through their boring and sometimes imperiled lives without help. Today thousands of relatives and friends of compulsive drinkers are seeking aid before the effects of someone else's drinking have ruined their home lives beyond repair. Not only spouses but parents, lovers and young or adult children of alcoholics are learning that they, too, can find comfort and a sense of security afforded by shared experience with group.

After centuries of treating alcoholism as a moral weakness, most present-day medical opinion considers alcoholism a disease which, like diabetes, can be arrested, but not cured.⁶¹ It may be possible for alcoholics to control their early drinking, but once it becomes obsessive, they are no longer able to control it themselves. Al-Anon admit that since alcoholism is a disease, it is useless to blame alcoholics for lack of will power, or to plead with them to stop damaging themselves or their business prospects. Relatives of alcoholics do not blame themselves either. They know they do not cause the disease and they cannot cure it. Alcoholism is a disease yet it is known to be a progressive illness. It

⁶⁰ *Al-Anon Family Groups*, 5.

⁶¹ *Al-Anon Family Groups*, 8.

never gets better; it can only get worse, until radical steps are taken to arrest the progression. The alcoholic may be in one of these stages of illness:⁶²

1. At the beginning, he or she may be a heavy drinker who has not yet been hurt too badly, or has not hurt others seriously. The drinking may be restricted to weekends or special occasions. He may have lost little, if any, time from his job. She may still appear to be in control of her situation.
2. Perhaps he or she has reached the stage where serious problems have begun. He may have lost a job or two and his family life may have become anxious and unhappy. At this stage the alcoholic recognizes he should do something about his drinking but refuses to consider seeking outside help. He insists he can handle the problem alone. Meanwhile, the drinking continues to get worse, with increasing damage to home and business life.
3. By now the alcoholic himself may recognize that drinking is a problem he cannot control. There may be plenty of evidence. His closest personal relationships may have been badly affected. He may have been imprisoned for brief periods as result of drunken behavior. He may have lost a succession of jobs. She may neglect her work, the children, and appearance. At this point the alcoholic often wavers between a sincere desire to stop drinking and an obstinate resistance to real help.
4. Finally the alcoholic seems completely lost and beyond recovery. He may have been hospitalized or committed to institutions or have drifted away from all sense of responsibility, forsaking family, friends and every other aspect of normal living.
5. Beyond this lies insanity or death.

⁶² *Al-Anon Family Groups*, 10-12.

Facing this situation, Al-Anon members learn to apply the Twelve Steps to their daily lives, and find that their needs, too, are met by their spiritual depth and wisdom. When Al-Anon members talk with one another and exchange ideas, they are able to apply the experience of others to their particular problems. They discover they have just as much to gain from the Steps as the alcoholics have. They find that the alcoholic experience has made them sick, too, and they need emotional sobriety as much as alcoholics need freedom from alcohol.

Reflections on Al-Anon Family Group

The strength of *Al-Anon Family Group* is that though they have their roots in Alcoholics Anonymous, they do not simply duplicate the method. Instead of focusing on Alcoholics and help them recover, which is considered the AA field of responsibility, Al-Anon Family Group create another field of need which includes families of alcoholics and those who have been affected by that drinking. They seek to help them cope with the problem of alcohol.

The weakness of Al-Anon Family Group is that though they use the Twelve Steps like Alcoholics Anonymous they do not work with Christian perspective. In other words, they do not care about spiritual truths that are associated with the Twelve Steps. An example is that they consider alcoholism as a disease that can be arrested but not cured. With this perspective they do not open themselves to God's healing love and grace enough to claim that healing is possible.

I mention Al-Anon Family Group simply as part of my literature review, but I do not plan to use their program in my project of mobilizing the Chadian Church to understand and treat alcoholism.

I have come to the end of my literature review where I tried to show practitioners of my thesis what they need to know about some writings related to my topic. I found necessary to discuss and show whether I agree with them or not.

In the next chapter that is my project design, I will explain why I develop my project and what I actually want to do with it.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT DESIGN

After presenting the problem of alcoholism and its settings, laying down its theological foundation, and its literature review, I find necessary to design a project of training in the form of a seminar for pastors of local churches in Chad who will be able to offer treatment to alcohol addicts. This seminar will include five teachings as follows.

1. The first teaching will create an awareness of the alcohol problem for these pastors and church leaders,
2. The second teaching will show a biblical understanding of alcoholic consumption,
3. The third teaching will show a biblical understanding of progressive sanctification,
4. The fourth teaching will present the Twelve Steps and their biblical foundations,
5. The fifth teaching will show how to start our first Twelve Step group.

Practically, I will begin with a pilot program made of 30 to 40 pastors and church leaders who will implement this project toward alcohol addicts. Then I will call them back for a session of evaluation before I let them go and teach others to do the same.

Teaching # 1: The Awareness of the Alcohol Problem

Many people laugh when one talks about alcoholism BECAUSE this does not interest them. It is not enough to say there is alcohol problem in town, in a country, or in church. People must first become aware of the features of alcoholism in order to become

concerned with this issue, and that they manage to say, "This is our problem."

As long as this step is not taken, it is not worth going further. How then, are we to create this awareness?

- During an educative event a group can start a discussion. For example a meeting that degenerates into fights because of alcohol or the death of someone killed by a young drunk.
- Or more generally, what are the problems of our group, our village, our neighborhood? Alcohol often comes on the top of the list and the group can discuss it. Or are there problems in our group that occur concurrently with alcohol consumption such as violence, spouse abuse, driving accidents, or death due to alcohol poisoning?
- Or search the positive or negative aspects of alcohol in our lives. Are we satisfied with the situation? Do we wish a change?

This is not to tell the group, "Alcohol is hurting you" but to help the group realize the consequences of drinking and recognize themselves, "Alcohol may harm us if we abuse it."

In addition, it is not difficult to see the consequences of alcoholism. It is less obvious to see the causes, and especially the real causes.

In this case, easy answers are not good to look at. For example, poverty is often cited among the causes but in reality alcoholism contributes to poverty. On reflection, we see that it takes money to drink and that he who stops drinking will instead save his money and better manage his budget.

One way to ascertain the negative effects of alcohol is to ask questions such as:

- Why did alcohol become so important in people's way of life?
- Do we not have something to do with this?
- What are we responsible for?
- Who owns the problem of alcohol abuse? The individual or some other person or source?

As long as we throw all the responsibility on others, such as the government, the Church, women, husbands, etc., we cannot enter a process of change since everything depends on the others and nothing on us. We are victims and not responsible. No personal and collective development can be done in this state of mind.

By analyzing the problem, the group already starts; an approach begins to understand the situation. Facing a situation that we do not understand, we are powerless. But if we understand, we begin to control the situation, and a solution can be envisaged. At this stage, the group becomes an adult. He agreed to look at his problems in the face, to recognize his responsibility and if he wants, he can decide to act for a change.

The effects of alcoholism on the body, on the family, and on the society were mentioned in the first chapter. Here we expand our inquiry to uncover other features of alcoholism. Alcoholism is a physiological, a psychological, and a spiritual disease.

1. Alcoholism Is a Physiological Disease:

Some people are more prone to alcoholism due to a biological weakness that does not metabolize alcohol properly, thereby causing drunkenness more quickly as well as

addiction too. Some people use alcohol to treat anxiety disorders. Is there a biological basis to such disorders? Some malfunctions that are seriously aggravated or caused by alcoholism are listed by systems:¹

- *Cardiovascular system*: enlarged heart and cardiac failure (of which alcoholism is the major cause in persons under 50 years of age), high blood pressure;
- *Digestive system*: cancer of the mouth, esophagus, stomach (a sobering statistic: roughly 35% to 40% of all cancers are caused by the combination of alcohol and tobacco); ulcers, chronic gastritis, chronic pancreatitis; diabetes, hypoglycemia; loss of appetite, malnutrition, nausea; chronic diarrhea, because of associated hemorrhoids;
- *Skeletal system*: bones fractures (not only because alcoholics fall a lot, but because alcohol weakens and impairs bone tissue, making them brittle bones);
- *Muscular system*: loss of muscle tone (permanent and irreversible);
- *Nervous system*: destruction of brain cells – atrophy (permanent and irreversible); loss of co-ordination and balance; peripheral neuritis; difficulty in sleeping and insomnia; *blackouts*. A person is awake and to all appearances functions normally (performs surgery, plays the guitar, pilots an airplane) but cannot later recall his actions, words, and circumstances of persons, time, place, etc. In *amnesia*: the memory has recorded but cannot play back; in a *blackout* has not recorded, and thus cannot play back... there is nothing on the tape! The experience can last for a few hours to a few days and longer. It is not related to the amount of alcohol consumed;

¹ Maurice Gelinas, *How to Overcome Alcoholism* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1990), 42-43.

- *Reproduction system*: impotence (males); fetal alcohol syndrome (infants born to females).

Those diseases along with many others such as puffy face and red eyes, Wernicke's syndrome etc.², contribute to overall poor health of the alcoholic and to the lowering of his life span by about 10 to 12 years.

2. Alcoholism Is a Psychological Disease:

Obsession is to the mind what addiction is to the body. It is the possession of the mind by a thought which now "owns" it. It is the preoccupation with something or with a person that takes over and enslaves the mind. No longer does the mind rule. This is what obsession is, the loss of freedom of thought.

In the initial stage of his disease, the drinker will be only mildly preoccupied with drinking: for example, being anxious to get the drinking started at a party. His obsession will progress until drinking becomes the focus of his life, a mental craving for the drug alcohol. The afternoon cocktail or a few beers at lunch or drinks before supper or the weekend drinking – these are constantly on his mind. The idea of having a good time without drink is simply abhorrent to him. He lives to drink, he is obsessed with the thought of drinking, and he has become a monomaniac (totally taken up by one thing, a drink). He is now *psychologically dependent on alcohol*, no longer able to solve any problem, take any decision, and cope with any emotion, without the crutch of alcohol.³

This is what alcohol does to heavy drinkers. It leads them to psychological dependency which is an idolatry of the mind.

² Wernicke's syndrome is a disease of the nervous system caused by a deficiency of thiamine and characterized by abnormal eye movements, a loss of muscle coordination, tremors, and confusion; it is almost always followed by amnesia and is most often seen in chronic alcoholics. Also called *Wernicke's encephalopathy*. Cf. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/wernicke's+syndrome> (accessed January 10, 2012).

³ Glelinas, *How to Overcome Alcoholism*, 46.

3. Alcoholism Is a Spiritual Disease:

A quick comparison shows that alcohol and sin lead to bondage.

The alcoholic is fast becoming a slave to his passion. Having seen the "liberators" effects of the drink, he wants only to repeat these experiments. He therefore continues to drink. But as the effects of alcohol subside, he must increase the dose. In addition, because alcohol disrupts his physiology, the alcoholic needs to feel normal, to maintain the presence of alcohol in his blood (the dependence). So, without necessity, he now drinks throughout the day. He is looking for an artificial equilibrium; the normal balance no longer exists. It is this dependence on alcohol that creates slavery; slavery much more serious than the illusory benefits of liberation that alcohol was initially made to the victim.

Sin, too, leads to slavery. He who indulges in evil does not educate his will or his foresight. He can no longer resist the temptations. "Then lust when it has conceived gives birth to sin," said James the apostle (James 1:15). In addition, temptations are more numerous in the living environments easier than in Christian circles: there are many more seductive women, reasons to waste money, opportunities lie, and mood of hatred or rivalries. So that the loss of the will, together with the frequency of temptations and the weakening of the moral conscience make the path of sin the easiest. It becomes a normal way of life. Now it will not be possible to back up the hill: sin imposes its slavery!

Besides, when one looks closely, alcoholism is a lordship problem. Who is drunkards' master, God or their desires? Do they desire God above all else, or do they desire something in creation more than they desire the Creator? The least one could say is

that drunkards are worshipping another god which is alcohol. This is what Welch underlines when he wrote,

Drunkenness violates the command “You shall have no other gods before me.” Heavy drinkers love alcohol. They are controlled by it as if they were its subjects and it was their ruler-lover. This alcohol-worship, however, is actually a form of self-worship. We worship people and things to get what we want. Those who worship money do so in order to get what they want. Heavy drinkers think neither to glorify God nor to love their neighbor. They drink to indulge their own desires, whether those desires are pleasure, freedom from pain, alleviation of fear, forgetting, vengeance, or a host of others.⁴

Teaching # 2: Biblical Understanding of Alcoholic Consumption

In the Bible, there is a positive as well as negative understanding of alcoholic consumption.

1. Positive Understanding of Alcoholic Consumption:

Several verses in the Bible show that among men and women of God in the Old Testament the moderate consumption of wine was accepted as part of their daily life (Genesis 27:25-37; Deuteronomy 14:22-26; 2 Samuel 16:1-2; 2 Chronicles 2:10; Nehemiah 5:18; Job 1:13, 18). There were at least four positive and responsible ways to use drink wine in the Old Testament.

a) *Wine as a tithe:* In Genesis 14:18 Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High brought out bread and wine to Abram. He blessed Abram and God, and Abram gave him one tenth of everything.

b) *Wine as refreshment:* In 2 Samuel 16:1-2 Ziba brought wine to king David to refresh those who become exhausted in the desert.

⁴ Welch, *ADDICTIONS A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel*, 23, 24.

c) *Wine to improve a sad mood:* In Psalms 104:14-15 the psalmist praises God for the blessings of "wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart."

d) *Wine to help digestion:* In Isaiah 25: 6 God will soon prepare a feast for His people that includes wines, probably as wine actually helps digestion of large quantities of food, "On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines."

e) *Other positive references to the use of wine:* In Genesis 27:25-37 Jacob brought food and bread to Isaac, his father and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank; and Isaac blessed Jacob, his son. When David was a young man his father Jesse sent him with bread and wine to the king Saul (1 Samuel 16:20); When Israel crowned David king in Hebron they drank wine in abundance (1 Chronicles 12:39-40). Nehemiah, as governor of Israel had wine in abundance at his table (Nehemiah 5:18); Esther served wine to the king, her husband (Esther 5:6); Job's children drank wine (Job 1:13, 18); In Proverbs 9:5 Wisdom's invitation to her banquet included eating of the bread and drinking of the wine she had mixed. In Proverbs 31:6-7 wine was given to those who are in anguish to drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. Ecclesiastes 9:7 says "Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do." In prediction to the Gospel of the kingdom of God, Isaiah invites everyone who thirsts, to come to the waters; and everyone who has no money to buy wine and milk without money and without price (Isaiah 55:1). Moreover, among the promises of restoration of Israel, Amos 9:14 says that the children of Israel shall plant vineyards and drink wine.

In the New Testament there are at least two positive ways to use wine:

a) *Medical use of wine*: This includes its beneficial effect on wounds. In Luke 10:34, the Good Samaritan went to the half dead man, "bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them (Luke 10:34). Also, Paul recommended Timothy to no longer drink only water, but to take a little wine for the sake of his stomach and his frequent illnesses (1 Timothy 5:23).

b) *Domestic use of wine*: Wine was offered to guests. At a wedding in Cana when the wine gave out, Jesus positively responded to Mary's request and changed water into wine to meet the need of so many guests at the event (John 2:3, 9).

In summary we saw that both in Old Testament and New Testament fermented wine was used by men and women of God probably in a good way as they drank it with joy in their homes and especially during their feasts, as they offered it to their guests and even as drink offering to the Lord. Abundance of wine was viewed as sign of blessings from the Lord and its lack as sign of calamity. Besides its use for nourishment we saw too that fermented wine was used for medical purpose to bring happiness to those who have bitterness in their heart, for its beneficial effect on wounds, on fatigue, and on illnesses.

2. Negative Understanding of Alcoholic Consumption:

However, there are many negative references to wine in the Bible especially verses that condemn the use of it to the point of drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21), and verses that prohibit wine to specific groups of people and at a specific time. As examples, the priests were forbidden to drink wine when ministering in the tabernacle (Leviticus 10:9). Wine was likewise forbidden to the Nazirite during the time of his separation (Numbers 6:3, 20). Kings were to avoid wine; it

so as to govern with a clear head (Proverbs 31:4–5). The Rechabites refused to drink wine because a notable ancestor had commended them not to do so (Jeremiah 35:6-7). Elders must not be given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3); and deacons not given to much wine (1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3).

Moreover, excessive wine drinking leads to negative outcomes such as sexual immorality and incest (Genesis 19:32-35; Hosea 4:18), poverty (Proverbs 21:17; 23:21), strife, (Proverbs 23:29-30), woe and sorrow (Proverbs 23:29-30), error, (Isaiah 28:7), contempt of God's works (Isaiah 5:12), scorning (Hosea 7:5), and rioting and wantonness (Romans 13:13).

In Genesis 9:21-24 Noah drank of the wine and became drunk, and he lay uncovered in his tent. This clearly shows that drunkenness leads to trouble.

In Genesis 19:30-38, the two daughters of Lot, seeing there was no man in the country to come in to them after the manner of all countries have agreed to make their father drink wine in order to have sex with him and keep his race.

In Leviticus 10:8-10 a directive is given to Aaron and his descendants (the Levites) not to consume wine or strong drink before ministering at the tabernacle, that they may not die; this is a statute forever throughout their generations.

We can deduce from this prohibition that for some instances some people are never to drink intoxicating beverages.

In Numbers 6:3-20 Nazirites during the time of their consecration shall separate themselves from wine and strong drink; they shall drink no wine vinegar or other vinegar, and shall not drink any grape juice or eat grapes, fresh or dried. Then the priest shall elevate them as an elevation offering before the Lord. After that the Nazirites may drink wine. In Judges 13:4, 7

both wine and strong drink are referred to as prohibited to Samson and his mother as part of the Nazirite vow process.

Several verses of Proverbs refer to wine and strong drink and describe their consequences. Proverbs 20:1 says that "wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." Proverbs 21:17 says, "He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich. Proverbs 23:20-21 says, "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags." Proverbs 23:29-32 describe furthermore the sad condition of those who indulge to excess of wine: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has Complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper." In Proverbs 31:4-5 kings and rulers were warned against using wine and strong drink, in order that their faculties not be dulled when performing their duties, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink; lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted."

Isaiah speaks several times of those who have been overcome with wine and strong drink, thus condemns strong focus on drink. Isaiah 5:11-12 says, "Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands." Isaiah 5:22 says, "Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks." Isaiah 28:1, 7 says, "Woe to the proud crown of the

drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of the rich valley of those overcome with wine! These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused with wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgment."

Jeremiah also warns against intoxication of wine. Jeremiah 23:9 says, "Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me, all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the Lord and because of his holy words."

Ezekiel mentions as prohibited to priests at specific time and place, "No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court" (Ezekiel 44:21). Hosea says that "Wine and new wine take away the understanding (Hosea 4:11).

In the New Testament wine and strong drink are prohibited to John the Baptist in regard to his subjection to a Nazirite vow, "for he (John the Baptist) will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:15). This is probably because John the Baptist has a special call on his life and it is so that he never can be accused of drunkenness when he is speaking as a prophet.

In Romans 14:21 Paul the apostle recommends not to eat meat or drink wine in front of those who find it offensive, "it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble."

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul clearly admonishes drunkenness, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,"

In his pastoral epistles, Paul warns deacons, bishops, and older women against drunkenness but not against drinking wine altogether. In 1 Timothy 3:8 he says, "Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, *not addicted to much wine*, not greedy for gain;" In Titus 1:7 he says, "For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or *a drunkard* or violent or greedy for gain," and in Titus 2:3 he says, "Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or *slaves to drink*; they are to teach what is good."

In summary, negative references to wine in the Bible clearly condemn heavy drinking or abuse of wine that is drunkenness. This is the sin of intemperance and gluttony in consumption. They show that drunkenness leads to many troubles such as poverty, confusion, stumbling, debauchery, foolishness, and shame. Because of this wine and strong drink are prohibited to specific groups such as Levites, Nazirites, kings and rulers, priests, bishops, deacons, and older women either in regard to their vow or in regard to their duties. For some of these groups the prohibition is for a specific time and place for example during the time of their consecration for the Nazirites or before ministering at the tabernacle for the Levites etc.

3. Biblical Principles about Alcoholic Consumption:

In addition to the strong biblical declarations against the misuse of alcohol, here are four biblical principles which will guide our project.

a) The principle of Christ's lordship: Paul writes, "For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:20). Christians are free, but not free to do whatever they want. Freedom in Christ demands a higher standard of

conduct and places on Christians the responsibility of pleasing their Lord. They belong to Christ, for he gave his life as a ransom for theirs. In view of what Christ has done for believers, they should put forth every effort to honor his lordship in their lives. In this perspective, is a Christian honoring Christ's lordship when he engages in behavior, such as drinking, that may hinder others in their faith walk? It is obvious that a Christian honors Christ's lordship when he lives a sober life that edifies others.

b) The principle of edifying others: Paul's advice to Christians is to pursue those things that build up and strengthen others, "Let all things be done for edification" (1 Corinthians 14:26; cf. 10:23). Christians are servants, and they should consider how their behavior can best serve others. From this perspective Paul counsels the strong Christian to refrain from any behavior (including eating and drinking) that influences others to engage in activities that may be to their spiritual detriment.

c) The principle of the proper treatment of the body: Paul teaches that the body is sacred because God created it, and the Holy Spirit dwells in the body of each Christian (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Whatever we do to our body affects the residence of the Holy Spirit. Although there are studies that show consumption of alcohol in moderation, such as red wine, is good for heart,⁵ excessive alcohol consumption and intoxicating liquors destroy the body and do not facilitate a life that glorifies God. Out of respect for God, Christians should do everything possible to engage in activity that honors and strengthens his or her body.

⁵ According to the Mayo Clinic staff, red wine, in moderation, has long been thought of as heart healthy. The alcohol and certain substances in red wine called antioxidants may help prevent heart disease by increasing levels of "good" cholesterol and protecting against artery damage. However, while the news about red wine might sound great if you enjoy a glass of red wine with your evening meal, doctors are wary of encouraging anyone to start drinking alcohol. That's because too much alcohol can have many harmful effects on your body. Still, many doctors agree that something in red wine appears to help your heart. It's possible that antioxidants, such as flavonoids or a substance called resveratrol, have heart-healthy benefits. Cf. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/red-wine/HB00089> (accessed January 11, 2012).

The entire person of each Christian should be submissive to the indwelling Holy Spirit and should be under his control and not that of alcohol (Ephesians 5:18).

d) The principle of doing all to God's glory: This governing principle appears in 1 Corinthians 10:31 when Paul deals with varying attitudes toward eating, drinking and sex. "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Whatever activity a Christian engages in, whatever decisions are made, all must be to God's glory, not one's own selfish satisfaction. What cannot be done for God's honor and thanksgiving to him should not be done at all. So the question to the Christian who drinks is: Does the one who drinks or the one who abstains glorify God? In view of these four principles, it is obvious that God is best glorified by the Christian who abstains out of consideration for others. There is no glory for God in the pursuit of pleasure that has no regard for the influence it has on others to drink and for the hindrance it has on the progress of the gospel. Living for the glory of God must be the governing principle of our lives.

4. My Assumptions about Alcoholic Consumption:

From all the positive and negative understanding, and from the biblical principles about alcoholic consumption, I assume that:

a) Moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages is permissible in the Bible. Alcohol, consumed in small quantities, is neither harmful nor addictive (unless the person consuming it has an addictive personality). Consumption of small quantities of alcohol is a matter of Christian freedom and virtue. Drunkenness and addiction are sin. Therefore,

Christians are not to judge people when they drink a little of wine or any alcoholic beverage in appropriate way because the Bible does not condemn it either.

b) Any misuse of alcohol that is drunkenness is to be forbidden in Christian's life and in Church because of its terrible affect on individuals, on the Church, and on society, and especially because the Bible condemns it.

c) Christians are not to reject drunkards or alcohol addicted people. Rather, they are to love them, and to help them get healed from drunkenness and live freedom that Jesus offers to those who surrender their lives to him.

Nevertheless, due to the biblical concerns regarding alcohol and its effects, due to the easy temptation to consume alcohol in excess, and due to the possibility of causing offense and/or stumbling of others, it is understandable why for many Christians to abstain from drinking alcohol is the preferred way. Although I have shown that the Bible teaches that a moderate consumption of alcohol is permissible, in our current context where alcohol abuse is common, it would benefit both the church and society to model abstinence as a viable Christian choice that can be defended from the Bible. Such modeling is certainly necessary by Christian leaders who might be called to help those addicted to alcohol to live a life of sobriety. For those in recovery from alcohol addiction, lifelong abstinence is the only sure way to freedom. For that reason, a leader who joins them in abstinence is modeling the virtue of self-control necessary to remain sober.

Teaching # 3: Biblical Understanding of Progressive Sanctification

1. What Is Progressive Sanctification?

What God has begun in regeneration he will work to continue without interruption

throughout the believer's life. "For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

Progressive Sanctification is that gracious work of God in a believer whereby He enables him to replace works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, thereby causing him to become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. This process of spiritual growth continues over the course of a Christian's lifetime and is, therefore, neither instantaneous nor complete, but gradually occurs as he appropriates God's sanctifying truth which is found solely in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.⁶

Commenting this definition, the author shows that Christian life is a transformation process that engages and redeems every aspect of our humanity. God himself actively works to change us; we actively work to change; the process will be completed on the day of Christ. God initiates and sustains a change process in three steps: 1) that is progressive throughout our lives, 2) that call for our active participation in response to God's word of promise and command, and 3) that is incomplete in this life. God will perfect us when we see Jesus face to face.⁷

Progressive sanctification begins when we are born again and placed "in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17). Progressive sanctification is a daily dealing with our sins and growth in holiness. The Christian life begins with regeneration whereby the Holy Spirit implants spiritual life in the believer. Sanctification begins at that same moment of the new birth and God progressively separates the new believer from sin unto Himself. He transforms the whole life toward holiness and purity.

⁶ Unknown author, "Progressive Sanctification"
http://www.nanc.org/Theological_Considerations/Progressive_Sanctification.aspx
 (Accessed August 18, 2011).

⁷ Unknown author, "Progressive Sanctification"
http://www.nanc.org/Theological_Considerations/Progressive_Sanctification.aspx
 (Accessed August 18, 2011).

Believers have been “set apart,” sanctified, once-for-all by the perfect offering of Christ’s body for our sins. All believers are sanctified positionally. It is our new standing with God as Christians. Our standing is what God has done for us in Christ. Progressive sanctification, on the other hand, refers to sanctification as experienced in the daily life of the believer. Daily victory over sin is itself a separation unto God and is therefore sanctification. This should be an ever-increasing growth experience.

This process of sanctification never ends during this earthly life. It will be consummated in glorification when the believer through the death and resurrection or at the rapture stands in the presence of the Lord God conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ.

2. What Does Progressive Sanctification Involve?

Progressive sanctification involves our availability to and collaboration with the Holy Spirit, our separation from sin, and our growth in the likeness of Christ. Every Christian is a sanctified person, belonging to Christ, and therefore should keep from immorality (1 Corinthians 6:13-14; 2 Corinthians 7:1). We are involved in a lifetime struggle against sin and a moment-by-moment submission to the Holy Spirit for victory.

Paul the apostle admonishes the believer to “present your bodies as living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). It is a choice we make as believers. No one else can make that choice for us. It is self-determined and is repeated often. We are to “consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:11). Based upon that truth “do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts” (Romans 6:12). “For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14). The

principle is clearly stated in Romans 6:22, “But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life.”

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God in the prevention of sin in the Christian’s life. The Psalmist testified, “I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you” (Psalms 119:11). The Holy Spirit indwells the believer for the purpose of enabling us to overcome sin and conform us to the likeness of Christ. When we “walk by the Spirit” we do not carry out the deeds of the flesh, but produce “the fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16, 22).

The Scriptures do not promise eradication of our fallen nature. Quite the contrary, the Bible teaches the ever present pull of the sin nature as Paul the apostle writes of in Romans 7:21-24,

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

However, the Holy Spirit gives us moment by moment victory through His indwelling presence (Galatians 5:16-23). The believer is to be under the control of the Spirit and to walk accordingly (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16). Progressive sanctification sets us more and more apart from “the world, the flesh and the devil,” and makes us more and more like our risen Lord in character. It is only as we “abide in Him” that we grow in Christian maturity. The end result of a life fully yielded to God is eternal life.

3. Progressive Sanctification Applied to a Recovery from a Life Controlling Sin:

Such an application includes repentance from sin; change into the likeness of Christ, and perseverance in living according to the gospel.

a) Repentance from sin: For a believer who is enslaved by the sin of alcoholism, there is still hope of recovery. God is able to deliver him completely by cleansing, sanctifying, and justifying him (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Though alcohol abuse is a failing of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), the Holy Spirit can empower the will of the believer leading to self-control, which in turn can become the virtue of temperance needed to overcome it (Galatians 5:22-23). The Bible says, "No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Proverbs 28:13); "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective" (James 5:16); "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

Therefore, for the believer to embrace recovery from alcohol abuse, dependency, and addiction, he needs to truly repent and turn away from sin and toward God. True repentance recognizes the character of sin as deserving God's judgment, and turns from that sin to ask God's forgiveness. Moreover, he needs to open his soul to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit over the appetites of his flesh, as Paul the apostle writes of in Romans 8:5- 6, 12-14,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live

according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

b) Change into the likeness of Christ: Here, an alcoholic addict believer who repented from sin must show the process by which he maintains his sanctification. This is the present aspect of sanctification referred to as practical sanctification because the believer must “practically” work out his salvation in everyday life.

Practically then, a repentant believer needs to abide in the Scriptures, that is to study God's word every day and also with other believers in his community. Jesus said in John 8:31-32, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." It is important to notice that this promise is conditional. We are not really disciples of Jesus unless we abide (remain, dwell, stay) in his word, that is the Bible. This shows how important it is for us to study the Bible. True maturity will never come by experiences or feelings, but only through the ongoing study of God's Word. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Moreover, he needs to remain in fellowship with other believers on regular basis. "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Notice that believers are to "provoke one another to love and good deeds." It is not God's intention that we be outsiders and on our own. Therefore, it is very important for a repentant believer to find other believers in his area which he can meet with for prayer, Bible study, and worship on a regular basis.

In addition to his remaining in fellowship with other believers, the repentant believer needs to praise God each time he is tempted to drink, as it is written, "Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Hebrews 10:15). It is important that he changes his perspective from himself to God, praising God the Problem-solver rather than the problem itself. As long as his attention is on alcohol, he is honoring it. But if his attention is on God, he is honoring him, as it is written, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

As he still needs practical spiritual help, he may seek out a spiritual counselor (a pastor or a God fearing friend), and ask him to pray for deliverance for him, especially from psychological and physical dependence, and even from the desire to drink. As he prays for his own or someone else prays for him, it is important that he decides not to drink right now and live his decision one day at time not to "worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34).

c) Perseverance in living according to the gospel: God requires of Christians not only that they believe the gospel, but also that they persevere in living according to the gospel, regardless of the difficulties they meet. Perseverance is proof of the authenticity of faith and leads to spiritual maturity (John 8:31; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3-4).

If a repentant believer has true faith in God, he will prove it by his steadfast trust in the power and promises. His perseverance is not something God rewards by giving him salvation, but something that gives proof of his salvation. It shows that his faith is authentic (Mark 13:13; Luke 21:26; Philippians 3:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

At times a repentant believer may be tempted to give up his Christian commitment. The source of his troubles may be the trials of life, persecution, worry, false teaching, and especially the desire to drink. He has to fight against these temptations by training himself in godliness, resisting the pressures of the world, continuing steadfastly in the truth he has believed, learning more of God through the Scripture, and giving himself wholeheartedly to whatever God has entrusted to him (1 Timothy 4:15; 6:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 10:23). As he fights against the temptation to go back and drink more alcohol, he has to endure the temptation and say, "Even in the future, I will need God's help to remain sober, and even to drink alcohol no more." The result of his perseverance will be the experience of salvation in its fullest expression at the return of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:24-25; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Revelation 2:26-28).

Teaching # 4: The Christian Twelve Steps to Sobriety and their Biblical Foundations

This teaching includes a simple presentation of the Christian Twelve Steps to sobriety and their related Scriptures, and an explanation on these Christian Twelve Steps.

1. The Christian 12 Steps and Biblical References.⁸

STEP ONE

We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and dysfunctional behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable. *"I know nothing good lives in me, that is, in my*

⁸ For the Christian 12 Steps to sobriety, cf. <http://www.choosehelp.com/christian-recovery/what-are-the-christian-12-steps-to-sobriety> (accessed January 5, 2012).

sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."

(Romans 7:18)

STEP TWO

Came to believe that God, a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity and stability. *"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."* (Phil 2:13); *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free."* (John 8, 31, 32)

STEP THREE

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as revealed in the Bible. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship."*

(Romans 12:1); *"... If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* (Luke 9:23)

STEP FOUR

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. *"Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord."* (Lamentations 3:40)

STEP FIVE

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."* (James 5:16a)

STEP SIX

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. "*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*" (Jas 4:10); "*If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land.*" (Isaiah 1:19)

STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*" (1 John 1:9); "*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*" (James 4:10)

STEP EIGHT

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. "*Do others as you would have them do to you.*" (Luke 6:31); "*Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.*" (Luke 19:8)

STEP NINE

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. "*Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*" (Matthew 5:23-24)

STEP TEN

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12); *"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."* (Romans 12:3)

STEP ELEVEN

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as revealed in the Bible*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."* (Colossians 3:16a); *"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."* Psalms 19:14)

STEP TWELVE

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. *"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."* (Galatians 6:1-2)

2. Explanation on the Christian Twelve Steps:

Step one: *"We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and dysfunctional behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable."*

Step one is about honesty, recognizing our brokenness. The Bible gives us a clear picture of our unmanageability and our useless and powerless efforts to try to do things for ourselves. God says, "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can

hold no water" (Jeremiah 2). We are created in the image of God, the God of infinite knowledge, power and love and to live in relationship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ. Without this relationship, we are lost and we lead a disordered life.

Sometimes we think we can manage ourselves the circumstances of our lives, but we eventually discover that these circumstances hide factors that we do not know. We believe that things like alcohol, drugs, sex, etc. can provide us the security we need, but soon we realize they do not provide real solutions to our problems and yet they pull us in a direction where we do not prefer to go but we feel powerless to give up.

God in His goodness, clearly explains to us the realities of life, "There is no one who has understanding; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, there is not even one. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 3:11, 12; 6:23)

If our life is not subject to the direction and power of God through Jesus Christ, we live a life of chaos. The first step towards the repair of this disorder is to recognize the chaos, our inability to repair it and then ask for help. God has the solution to our problems. Let us come to him if we know we have a problem. Let us ask him for help and receive from him the things that effectively give us life.

Step two: *"Came to believe that God, a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity and stability."*

Step two is about hope. What was impossible for us to achieve on our own is possible because we put in God's presence, a power greater than ourselves, a power that exceeds all human capacity. We reach out to Him to help us and we believe that He alone

has the power to restore us to sanity and stability that we need to live a healthy life. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) And he said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." (John 8, 31, 32)

God loves us so much and he paid a great price by giving his own Son to suffer for us so that we might live. He wants us to live in a loving relationship with him. God is ready to make sacrifices so that we can return to a life of fullness, a happy and free life. Therefore, we can safely entrust our lives in his hands.

How to make all this happen in our lives? We must admit that we cannot manage our lives by our own efforts and knowledge. We must admit that we have caused so much harm to ourselves and to others trying to live by ourselves. We must come to God and ask for forgiveness and healing. We must invite Jesus Christ to come and live in us and build a new life in us, according to his plan. We must accept the offer of Jesus Christ to be the bearer of our burdens. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). We must entrust our sins and sufferings to him instead of continuing to bear them ourselves and destroy our lives. Jesus is the only one who has the power to do all that. Another power in this world, however large it is can only disappoint us.

Step three: *"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as revealed in the Bible."*

Step three refers to trust in God and requires our decision to entrust to God our will and our lives. Often we think that our life is private and that God must not control it. In doing so, we are desperate, tired and confused. We recognize that our approach has

ended up in pain, frustration, disease and despair.

We come to God because we know we need help. We come to God because we realized that God is the Higher Power that can restore us to sanity. We are ready to do his will to be restored.

How can we please God? We have experienced how powerless we are facing the destroying evils of our lives. Fortunately, the word of God fills us with hope. As we take the decision to voluntarily accept forgiveness and restoration from God. He promises to give us a new heart and fill us with His Spirit so that we can make decisions according to his will. The new heart is God's gift to all who believe in the work of Jesus on their behalf.

Often we are powerless over the attraction of sin. However, God does not ask us just to live a godly life. He also gives us the power to do so. God works in our lives helping us to obey Him. As we learn about God through Bible reading and prayer, God can begin to transform us from within. As we choose to trust God's goodness and make healthy choices, we begin to experience satisfactory changes and a rich life that glorifies the Lord.

Step four: *"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

Step four involves self-examination as it is written, "Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord." (Lamentations 3:40) Generally people do not want to disclose their bad acts or hidden things they have done and that have offended others. However, in order to have a clear conscience and peace of heart, it is good to seek in prayer to remind us of things we have done and that may have offended God and others, write them not to forget them, make repair for what requires repair, and praise the Lord

for what requires praise and thanks.

It is humiliating to reveal our imperfections, our true feelings and admit that they have affected others or they have affected us. Alcoholics often do not easily remember their actions that may have offended others. They tend to deny the facts and not to accept their responsibility.

Performing step 4 is a worthy exercise that allows us to recognize the facts and unhealthy attitudes and to live differently. "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:15-18).

Step five: *"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."*

Step five concerns the discipline of confession and is very important in the recovery process. Why do we admit our wrongs? As we are under the hold of our addiction we may avoid honest communication with others on our problems. It is important, however, that we return to the relationship that helps us face the truth. The Bible speaks of the value of honesty, to deal honestly and directly. "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." (James 5:16) "So then, putting away falsehood let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another." (Ephesians 4:25)

When we accept our wrongs to others, the influence of their friendship can help us stay on track. They can provide us with an objective point of view, helping us to recognize the truth. We isolate often because we are ashamed or afraid that we will be

rejected if we reveal what we really are. Admit our wrongs to someone we trust helps to break the isolation.

Admit the exact nature of our wrongs requires us to be accountable in the true and accurate terms. Only when we are clear and specific that we will no longer be able to deceive ourselves about the nature of our wrongs. We know that God knows all things. So we tell the truth and obtain forgiveness. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8, 9)

Step 5 is the foundation of a wonderful new way of life we have chosen, radical honesty. God's promise is that we know the truth and the truth will set us free.

Step six: *"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."*

Step six is about the change of heart, the internal transformation also called repentance. When we engage with God and want him to remove the sins of our lives, he will make that his desires become our desires.

When the will of God is first in our lives, what we do has positive results. We are not trying to do things that are better for us, but God's priorities become our priorities. Our goal is to love God and to have a relationship with Him. So we experience the joy of walking with Him.

As we work Step 6 we make a fundamental change in our lives. We seek to become people who want God's will. We will experience victory in that we can say with Jesus, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work." (John 4:34) We are changing our desires to match the desires of God honestly and overcoming misconceptions.

We cannot make ourselves perfect or good enough for God. God is the only one who can remove patterns of sin in our lives. As we entrust our lives into the hands of God and that we agree with him that his ways are straight, we allow Him to remove our self-destructive behavior and reform our desire to match his will. The defects of character that we want to eliminate are often developed by many years of struggling to survive. They belong to us and will not disappear overnight. This will not happen automatically, it is a process. Step 6 is a commitment to a new way of life and continued obedience to the Lord of life.

Step seven: *"Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."*

Step seven is about humility and involves the transformation or purification of our character. It is an essential part of the cleansing process and prepares us for the next step of our journey. The first six steps have made us aware of our problems, look honestly at our lives, they have revealed aspects of our lives previously hidden, so that we are now ready to change our attitudes and behaviors. The seventh step gives us the opportunity to turn to God asking him to remove these parts of our nature that cause us pain. We know how we were deeply embedded in our faults when we are ready to let God remove them, we must be willing to let him do the right thing for our recovery.

When we ask God to remove our shortcomings and to cleanse us, we should be ready to go by the fire of purification. The best way to clean a metal or gold is to melt it with fire. Even in the Bible, there were allusions to God who uses fire to cleanse us. The apostle Peter wrote, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for

joy when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:12, 13). The author of Hebrews writes, "Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12: 11).

When we give our lives in God's hands, He reshapes them as he wants. We must have an attitude of humility that allows us to accept that he is the Creator. His rules of morality and values become ours. Where our old ways of life are against the way of God revealed in Scripture, our behavior must change. Our new life may look like the one we left behind, or completely different. God is the master craftsman. Whatever he does, we can trust him because he will rebuild our lives beautifully when we are on his way.

Step eight: *"Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."*

Step eight is about seeking forgiveness and involves examining our relationships with people we had harmed and our willingness to make amends to them all. Motivation for the preparation of our list of wrongs and for making honorable repairs with people we have offended is the hope of having a clear conscience.

However, sometimes it is possible that our efforts to make amends fall short of forgiveness we expect because the offended person is not ready for forgiveness. In this case we must not fall into the deception, instead we must look to our God who knows our intentions and can offer us forgiveness sought. The Bible does not teach us to reach out to people to find forgiveness. It is God who grants forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12) He went on to explain, "For if you forgive others their

trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15).

The goal of making honorable repairs of our wrongs is to take personal responsibility for our behaviors and the effect they had on others. If these people respond by offering forgiveness, it is good. Our forgiveness, however, is not in their hands. Forgiveness comes from God in Jesus Christ. "And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:13-15).

Step nine: *"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."*

Step nine is about restitution and reconciliation and requires the discipline to make direct amends of harms except when doing so could cause further injury. Here we should be careful not to seek to achieve our own serenity at the expense of someone else. When we repair our wrongs, we must be wise in how we speak. We can be so eager to get things done; however, we must do it in order to take full account of those involved and make sure that our way of doing does not hurt them. In other words, we must weigh the feelings and needs of people who will be exposed to what we say and do.

We should not avoid making honorable repairs to save us the discomfort that will only strengthen our guilt and prevent our healing. In making the repairs we need to avoid gossip, complaints, and control to the people involved. In any case, when we are not sure what type of repair is required of us, we still need to remember that an apology is our

direct responsibility, except when someone is injured. We pray for the necessary guidance in the approach to each case and we check our intentions with someone we trust who can help us look at our motives and plan our approach.

"Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.'" (Luke 19:8-9) Making amends helps us to free ourselves from many of our past resentments. We achieve serenity in our lives by seeking forgiveness from those we have harmed and making restitution wherever it is appropriate. Without forgiveness, resentment will continue to undermine our growth. Making amends frees us from guilt and promotes freedom and health in our mind and body.

Step ten: *"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."*

Step ten is about daily responsibility and involves maintenance of progress in the healing process. Somehow step 10 is a continuation of the fourth step. As we progress in our recovery, our attitudes can change. We aspire to live a productive life. We may expose ourselves to new ideas, even to the Bible, far more than we have ever done before.

Yet, as we examine our personal inventory, we cannot see the kind of growth we had hoped for. If this is true, we must ask ourselves if our minds and our emotions are really receptive to new ideas and truths we hear. We can ask God to help us understand and overcome whatever is the cause of our resistance. So we will start to experience a positive spiritual growth.

Our initial goal was to stop the addiction that made our lives miserable and unmanageable. Once this is done, we can now wonder what life would be without our addictions. Being free of our dependency is expected to produce opportunities for us to put our talents and skills to work. There is great potentiality in all of us. As we accept God's perspective on our lives and respond openly to him, a new life will sprout within us. This new life will then be reflected in our talents and abilities to help restore the lives of others.

Step eleven: *"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as revealed in the Bible, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."*

Step eleven concerns our personal involvement in prayer and meditation. It drives us to seek the kind and meaningful contact with God through spiritual means of prayer and meditation. How can we do this? The Bible gives us a few ingredients to support our conversation with God.

Using prayer and meditation as tools, we begin to invite the Spirit of God to penetrate deeply into the deepest, confused, fearful and painful areas of our lives. We are not in learning truths about God, but in learning of the presence of God with whom we communicate. This sense of God's presence changed the whole atmosphere of our lives - from despair to enthusiastic hope.

Jesus said, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." (John 15:7) If we need wisdom, if we want to know what God wants us to do, we shall ask him and he will let us know. He will not reject our request. And we can be confident that God hears us whenever we ask anything according

to his will. And if we believe that he hears us when we ask something we can be sure he will give us what we ask.

Prayer and meditation are designed to help us learn to listen to God and to sensitize us to read the signs in our lives and in the world that can guide us to the knowledge and love of life as God wants for us. We get in touch with God who is already at work to change our lives and teach us how to live to glorify his name. When we communicate with God in this way, he will answer our prayers and will reveal his will to us.

Step twelve: *"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

Step 12 is about the ministry we are called to do to others. As we begin to live a healthier lifestyle, God gives us many opportunities to pass on useful information and emotional support to others who are also in need of recovery. God invites us to love others as we were loved. Love goes beyond mere words. Love does not just tell someone what the problem is. Love helps to find and implement a solution.

Love finds a way to support a change in a holy and healthy action. When we love someone and want to encourage him, we need to know what is really useful to him in his recovery process. When we give aid to someone, it is good to check whether the aid was appropriate. There are several ways to offer an encouragement: a word, a note, a prayer, a phone call, a visit, etc. We can be part of a support network for others in the same way we have been supported in our recovery. By providing an encouragement to others, we encourage ourselves.

The encouragement we want to bring to someone can be a valuable story to tell.

We need to learn the best way to communicate. We must be sensitive to allow God to lead us to someone who is in need of recovery and pray that the Spirit of God gives us the right words. We must listen carefully to what the other person really wants to know, and let their needs and interests guide us in following our history we share. If we are really happy with what God has done for us, we must follow his guidance as to when and what to share and listen carefully to what our listener really wants to know. Thus we will be able to communicate in a way that people can understand and receive.

Since we have gone through the Christian Twelve Steps, we are able to carry the message to others, share with them the new way of living according to God through our own story of transformation and ongoing life in God's grace.

Teaching # 5: Starting Our First Twelve Steps Group.

1. How We Plan to Begin:

According to Overcomers Outreach support groups, "a 'Group' is 2 or more gathered to support one another and help one another. It only takes a few dedicated people to maintain a group meeting on a regular basis. Key elements in getting started are: WHERE can we meet, WHEN can we meet, and WHO are we meeting?"⁹

WHERE: In this project, meetings of our first Twelve Steps group will be held in church, in homes, and anywhere that is convenient.

WHEN: We will begin with evening meetings from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. After six months, we will evaluate our activities and decide whether we change our schedule or not.

⁹ "Guidelines For Starting a Support Group"

<http://www.overcomersoutreach.org/sitebuilder/newgcn/startgroup.html> (accessed December 13, 2011).

WHO: In the beginning we will welcome only people who need recovery from alcohol addiction. As our ministry grows we may welcome people who need recovery from other addictions since the Twelve Steps can be used for treatment of other addictions as well.

During the seminar, our first Twelve Steps group is made up of these 20 to 30 pastors and church leaders attending the seminar. As they practice these teachings, they will split in small groups of 4 to 5 people each. In these small groups some persons will pretend to be alcoholic addicts and one will play the role of a pastor or a facilitator. Then they will change roles as we move on. By the time we complete the seminar they will be well prepared to start a real Twelve Steps group in their local church. It is in their local churches that will apply the above answers to the questions WHERE, WHEN, and WHO.

Before these pastors and church leaders go to implement what they were taught, we will take time to pray that the affected people in their congregations will have the courage to reach out for help and that these leaders be dedicated people to get the meeting started.

2. Meeting Format of a Twelve Steps group:

Our evening meeting from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM will fit into the following format.¹⁰

6:00 to 6:15 Opening songs

¹⁰ This format is an adaptation from Partners in Hope's "Meeting Outline for Facilitator" <http://www.partnersinhope.ca/ways-to-help/run-your-own-12-step-group> (accessed December 13, 2011).

Introduction: The facilitator can say, "Welcome to everybody! My name is _____ and I'm the facilitator for tonight's meeting. Let's have a moment of silence to remember why we are here and to pray for those who continue to suffer.

Opening prayer: (The facilitator can hand out the sheet to someone in the group to read or pray their own prayer)

God, we ask you to bless this meeting and the members gathered here tonight. You have said that where two or three of us gather together, that you would meet with us. We welcome you now. We have come to be with you. We have come to learn. We give ourselves to you to receive instruction in how to live responsibly as your people. We ask you to guide us. Help us to come closer to you and grant us new ways to live in gratitude for the gift of your love and forgiveness. In Jesus name. Amen

Introductions: Let's go around the circle and introduce ourselves by our first names.

6:15 to 6:30 **Welcome:** I've asked _____ to read our welcome (Hand out sheet to someone in the group to read)

We are a Christian 12-Step Recovery Group. We practice the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, while welcoming individuals seeking healing and recovery from a variety of destructive and addictive lifestyles. The only requirement for membership is a desire to love and be loved regardless of one's current condition in life. We choose to affirm God, the Creator as our higher power. We believe He has revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." and "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." We share through stories, discussion, singing, and prayer, the experience, strength and hope we have found in relationship with God and with each other. We seek to gain strength from one another in order to carry this message of hope to others who suffer. We gratefully acknowledge God's presence and pray for his guidance and direction in all we do and say.

Acknowledgement of Addictions: We come for many reasons and from a variety of backgrounds. Please take a moment to acknowledge what your addiction is and ask God to remind you where you are broken and in need of His healing. Ask God to help you to be open to His guidance and healing.

Why we Come: I've asked _____ to read "Why We Come."

Let's join our experiences together with God's purposes for our healing and our lives.

(Hand out sheet to someone in the group to read)

- 1. We are a group of individuals who believe our lives are unmanageable without the loving care and guidance of God. We believe we need a healthy and growing relationship with God, with ourselves, and with one another.*
- 2. We want to discover God's will for our daily lives and to learn practical ways to live out our faith in God.*
- 3. We seek to connect our personal growth programs with God's word and the life of Jesus Christ, God's Son.*
- 4. We believe God wants to speak to us personally through the Bible, and through God's Spirit, present in our lives.*
- 5. We gather to learn how to communicate with God, our gratitude, our needs, our plans, and our frustrations and to learn how to receive God's healing and guidance.*
- 6. We believe the sharing of our life journey with God and with each other is beneficial and healing for all of us.*
- 7. We welcome all those who seek to learn and journey with us. We encourage further spiritual growth through participation in a church fellowship.*

Announcements: The facilitator can make announcement about coffee break or any information participants need to know.

Coffee break from 6:30 to 6:45

6:45 to 7:45 Gathering song

Sharing: Participants can either share their experience, strength, and hope or discuss one of the 12 Steps as the facilitator leads them to. (For the discussion guide on each Step, see an example on Step two below).

Prayer: What has God said to us tonight? How do we need God's help?
What commitment to growth and change will we make with God tonight?
Let's have _____ pray for us as we seek to live with God in a deeper and fuller way.

7:45 to 8:00 **Reading the 12 Steps and Bible Principles:** Participants can read out loud the 12 Steps and their related Scripture as the way to memorize them little by little.

Closing Reminder (by the facilitator):
Thank you for sharing your experience, strength and hope with us tonight. Just a reminder. What you hear here stays here. We invite you to get in touch with someone this week for encouragement, to pray with each other, to support one another in a new and healthy way of living. If you wish further prayer there are many folks here who would love to pray with you after the meeting. Check with the facilitator if you don't know who to ask.

Life Affirmations and Serenity Prayer: (The facilitator) "Let's stand and say the "Life Affirmations" and the "Serenity Prayer" together."¹¹

Life Affirmations

1. *I am loved by God, always. I am loved without condition.*
2. *My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. There is a work for me to do today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction.*
3. *God is always with me. I need never face my problems alone. Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.*

¹¹ Life Affirmations and Serenity Prayer can be found under "Run your own 12 Step Group" <http://www.partnersinhope.ca/ways-to-help/run-your-own-12-step-group> (accessed December 13, 2011).

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with you forever in the next. Amen.

3. An Example of Discussion Guide to be Used during the Sharing Time:

In this example of Step two, the theme is "Hope" and the sub-theme of discussion is "Hope in Faith"¹²

Step 2: We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step Two is often referred to as "The Hope Step." In coming to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity, we will remember what it was like to live sanely and have the faith to hope that sanity can return.

"What is faith?" the Bible says, *"It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead"* (Hebrews 11:1). How can we be confident that something we want is going to happen, especially if all of our hopes have been dashed? How can we risk believing that the life we hope for is waiting for us around the bend?

The Bible tells us that the key is in the nature of the Higher Power we look to. We are told, *"Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he*

¹² "Hope in Faith" <http://www.partnersinhope.ca/thursday-worksheets/159-10-15-life-in-recovery-step-2-hope-in-faith> (accessed December 13, 2011). Each Step has its theme and sub-themes posted under <http://www.partnersinhope.ca/resources/12-step-discussion-guides/step>.

rewards those who sincerely look for him" (Hebrews 11:6). If we see God as one waiting to reward us, we will be more eager to look for him. If our faith has not matured to that point yet, we can ask for help. There was one man who came to Jesus and asked him to help his young son who was afflicted with a demon. He said to Jesus, "*Oh, have mercy on us and do something if you can.*" "*If I can?*" Jesus asked. "*Anything is possible if you have faith.*" The father instantly replied, "*I do have faith; oh help me to have more!*" (Mark 9). We can start by asking God to help us have more faith. Then we can ask him for the courage to hope for a better future.

The same Power that created the universe is available to create a new life from our shattered hopes. This source of all life and one true light of the world is the source of our recovery. Eternal life and true recovery are ours when we believe what God says, renounce our tendency to do things our way, and receive the one whom God sent to help us. The true light of the world became a human being, known to us as Jesus Christ. Through Jesus we can know what God is like and enjoy a relationship with him. Jesus Christ came to bring us God's forgiveness from sin and to reveal God's truth to us. God's forgiving grace says, "I forgive you for your wrongs; I love and accept you freely for the person you are." His truth says, "I will show you what is true about me, about life, about yourself, and others."

Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the LORD will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40)

The only issue remaining for us is, "Do we want to be restored to sanity?" or do we want to continue to run our lives on our own? One definition of insanity is "performing the same action again and again, each time expecting to achieve a different result." Have we had enough of our own insanity? Are we willing to give God a chance to restore us to sanity?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What is my current concept of sanity? What would a life of sanity look like for me?
2. What do I know/believe about Jesus Christ and His offer to be my Higher Power?
3. What benefits seem to come my way when I give my life over to God?
4. What changes will be necessary if God becomes the one in charge of my life rather than myself?

4. Schedule for the Day Seminar:

a) In the morning

7:00 to 7:30 Registration

7:30 to 7:45 Introductions (attendees introduce to one another)

7:45 to 8:00 Opening songs and prayer

8:00 to 9:00 Teaching # 1: The awareness of the alcohol problem

9:00 to 9:30 Coffee break

9:30 to 10:45 Teaching # 2: Biblical understanding of alcoholic consumption

10:45 to 11:00 Short break

11:00 to 12:00 Teaching # 3: Biblical understanding of progressive sanctification

b) In the after noon

12:00 to 2:00 pm Lunch and break

2:00 pm to 3:00 pm Teaching # 4: The Twelve Steps and their biblical foundations

3:00 pm to 3:15 Short break

3:15 pm to 4:00 Teaching # 5: Starting our first Twelve Steps group

4:00 pm to 5:00 pm Practice in small groups

5:00 pm to 5:30 pm Gathering, announces and closing prayer.

These pastors and church leaders will be assigned to go and implement the 12 Steps as a way to help alcohol addicts in their ministry setting (local church, school, and ministry). Then, awhile after the seminar, I will do a survey to evaluate how pastors and church leaders are more or less opened to the 12 steps to help people (cf. the evaluation sheet in the appendix). I trust this project design to be a great tool for mobilizing the Chadian Church to understand and treat alcoholism.

In the next chapter I will present the outcomes of this project for further research and ministry toward those who suffer from alcoholic addiction.

CHAPTER FIVE: OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSION

I expect the outcomes of this project to be:

- 1) The insights that help me formulate a future pastoral plan for helping those who struggle with alcohol.
- 2) The insights that help me create a project that educates Catholic and Protestant Leaders toward the consumption of alcohol and mobilize Church leaders to offer treatment to alcohol addicts.
- 3) The insights that help other organizations fighting against alcoholism in Chad question their approaches.
- 4) The information that will help guide further research beyond my D.Min. thesis.

About Future Pastoral Plan for Helping Those Who Struggle With Alcohol

By the grace of the Lord the project of training in the form of a day seminar for pastors and church leaders became reality. It was held on the 21st of January 2012 in Ndjamena, the capital city of Chad, my country.

In the lines that follow I will show how the participants' evaluation of the seminar and their reporting on work in small groups.

1. Evaluation of the Seminar by the Participants:

Of the 60 registered participants at the seminar, 47 completed and returned individual evaluation sheets (cf. the evaluation sheet in the appendix B), and 13 out of 47

have not returned their evaluation form because many of them left before the end of the seminar for other obligations. The exploitation of the individual evaluation sheets gave the following results.

a) Satisfaction or not with respect to the content of the training

40 participants out of 47 felt very satisfied with the content of the training seminar,
04 participants out of 47 felt that they are satisfied and
03 participants out of 47 felt that they were not satisfied.

b) The time allotted for the seminar

32 participants out of 47 found that the time allotted for the seminar is insufficient,
12 participants out of 47 found that the time is sufficient and
03 participants out of 47 did not answer the question.

c) Time management during the seminar

33 participants out of 47 felt that the time was well managed,
10 participants out of 47 found that the time has not been well managed and
04 participants out of 47 did not give their opinion.

d) Educational materials and power point presentation

39 participants out of 47 were satisfied with documents given to each participant and the power point presentation
03 participants out of 47 are not satisfied and
05 participants out of 47 did not give their opinion.

e) Interaction of participants (questions, answers and testimonies)

35 participants out of 47 are satisfied,
07 participants out of 47 are not satisfied and

05 participants out of 47 did not give their opinion.

f) Work in groups (discussion and practical suggestions)

43 participants out of 47 are satisfied,

01 participant out of 47 is not satisfied and

03 participants out of 47 did not give their opinion.

g) In relation to the use of previously Christian 12 Steps or not

45 participants out of 47 have not seen the method before the seminar of January 21, 2012

02 participants out of 47 did not give their opinion.

h) The usefulness of the Christian 12 Steps for the healing of alcoholics

44 participants out of 47 believe that the method is useful for their churches and institutions

03 participants out of 47 did not give their opinion.

i) Would like to practice the method after the seminar January 21, 2012

45 participants out of 47 wish to practice the Christian 12 Steps in their churches and institutions to help alcoholics break free of this dependence.

02 participants out of 47 did not give their opinion.

j) What participants like most in the seminar

Several mentioned the content of teaching, how to present education, and work in groups.

k) What the participants liked least during the seminar

Several mentioned the lack of time which did not allow them to ask many questions and receive answers. Some have complained that all the teaching was given in French whereas it should be translated into Chadian languages for some participants who

do not have an education enabling them to understand what is said in French.

1) How can such a seminar be improved next time?

Many suggest that such a seminar must be extended over two to three days so that participants have enough time to ask questions, give testimonies, and if possible practice the Christian 12 Steps to recovery in small groups during the seminar.

A few suggested that such a seminar must be sufficiently prepared in prayer and a greater number of participants be invited to a broader interest.

It is also suggested that for such a seminar, one must invite a doctor who is able to properly present the effects of alcoholism on the human body to properly educate participants.

2. Work in Groups Reports:

After teaching time, participants were divided into 6 groups of 7 to 8 people to discuss two issues and suggest practical measures for treating alcoholism. After two hours of discussion and sharing, participants returned to the plenary with practical suggestions.

a) Regarding the alcoholics

To the question: "How can the Church in Chad better help alcoholics get rid of this addiction?" participants suggested that the Church must:

- Above all be aware of the danger of alcohol abuse. Without this awareness very few people are interested in helping alcoholics and evil continues to do its damage.

- Identify alcoholics, possibly targeting their homes and maintain personal contact with them.
- Like alcoholics and pray for them, because God hates sin but loves the sinner.
 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17)
- Multiply the teachings and discussions on alcoholism in local churches and families,
- Organize spiritual retreats outside the churches and invite alcoholics there,
- Inform and educate Chadians (Christians and non-Christians) on the evils of alcoholism by the media (radio, television and newspapers),
- Produce in large numbers and distribute brochures to raise awareness against alcoholism.
- Create specialized care centers for alcoholics,
- Create and develop counseling ministries in local churches for the supervision and monitoring of repentant alcoholics. Practically, this requires that groups at different levels (youth, adults, old people, and previous alcoholics) are trained to deal with alcoholics.
- Support these efforts in prayer, seeing alcoholics as people who can be transformed by the grace of God.

In addition to participants' suggestions above, I suggest how Christians can co-operate with Medical professionals in the field of addiction recovery. Practically, this

requires finding out what it would take to get medical missionaries to come to Chad to establish a clinic of addictive recovery. For example asking Youth with a Mission to send missionaries trained in their School of Addictive Recovery to come to Chad to train lay leaders to become addiction recovery counselors. This is especially helpful if the lay leaders are men and women who themselves have overcome addiction.

b) Regarding families of alcoholics

To the question: "How can the Church in Chad help people who suffer because their partners or family members are alcoholics?" participants suggested that the Church must:

- Pray for the family members of alcoholics and provide them with biblical teachings to encourage them to love and pray for those who are under the influence of alcohol, hoping they will be transformed by the grace of God.
- Organize in cooperatives the women of alcoholics who are destitute and grant them micro-loans to enable them to develop income-generating activities such as embroidery, dyeing, knitting, soap, oil etc. To take care of themselves.
- Give these women the opportunity to get training in the areas of income generation.
- Set up of childcare for children of alcoholics who suffer and are left to themselves.
- Encourage Christian families to sponsor these children in regard to their education, food and health.

- Keep thinking on other ways to help families of alcoholics get out of their suffering.

Although participants in small groups were assigned to discuss about how the Church in Chad can help people who suffer because their partners or family members are alcoholics, the purpose of this thesis is first to help alcoholics themselves recover from their dependency. This purpose will be pursued through the reinforcement of training more and more pastors and church leaders within the Alliance of Evangelical Churches in Chad to do the job. This Alliance includes eight denominations that are:

- 1) The Christian Assemblies in Chad,
- 2) The Evangelical Church in Chad,
- 3) The Lutheran Church in Chad,
- 4) The Brethren Church in Chad,
- 5) The Assemblies of God in Chad,
- 6) The Missionary Church in Chad,
- 7) The Evangelical Church of Central Africa in Chad, and
- 8) The Evangelical Assemblies in Chad.

As the Alliance grows other Evangelical Churches will join the number and the need of training will increase more and more. Therefore, I expect this project to become a powerful ministry toward those who struggle with alcohol when many Christians will apply these teachings in their lives and teach others to do the same.

Besides the Alliance of Evangelical Churches in Chad is the Alliance of Pentecostal Churches in Chad. The two Alliances constitute what is called the Protestants in Chad. The Alliance of Pentecostal Churches in Chad includes:

- 1) The Chadian Evangelical Church of Cooperation,
- 2) The Chadian Apostolic Church,
- 3) The Church of God in Chad,
- 4) The Deeper Life Biblical Church,
- 5) The Hour of Deliverance, Light of World,
- 6) The Baptist Church of Chad,
- 7) The Assemblies of God Church in Chad,
- 8) The Evangelical Messianic in Chad,
- 9) The Evangelical Action for Revival

Since the two Alliances had opportunities to come together for activities such as prayer for the nation of Chad and evangelism outreach, I expect the ministry to grow and to reach Pentecostal Churches as well.

I pray that in a near future, some pastors and church leaders who have the heart for this ministry would come together as a Committee to reflect and make practical suggestions about the means of developing such a ministry. I expect such a Committee to be composed of men and women who have passion for lost souls and who view this ministry not only as an opportunity to lead alcoholics to physical recovery but also to eternal life.

About a Project that Educates Catholic and Protestant Leaders

I expect the outcomes of this thesis to be the insights that help me create a project that educates Catholic and Protestant Leaders toward the consumption of alcohol and mobilize Church leaders to offer treatment to alcohol addicts.

As I mentioned earlier, at the beginning French missionaries who evangelized Chad were Catholics and tolerant toward alcohol consumption. Therefore, they allowed the first Catholic Christians to drink alcohol whereas Protestant missionaries who evangelized Chad were all Anglophone from Norway, Australia, and New Zealand etc. They were all abstinent. Therefore, they forbade any form of the alcohol consumption.

1. What Is Being Done by the Catholic Church in Chad to Reduce Alcohol Abuse:

This permission of drinking alcohol among Catholics, however, led many Chadians to drunkenness to the regret of Catholic Church leaders today.

To reduce alcohol abuse, the Catholic Church in Chad created the Diocesan Center for Action Research in Alcoholism (CEDIRAA) with the charge of creating an awareness of the harmful effects of alcohol. A group "Action Research in Alcohol" was set up in October 1999 in Ndjamená with the goal to bring out the strategies of reducing alcohol abuse. Its method of action is based on an approach of animation that goes from the grassroots so that solutions are proposed and implemented by the populations concerned. This multidisciplinary group consists of doctors, nutritionists, sociologists, lawyers, social workers, religious leaders, sober alcoholics.¹

¹ This information is published on the cover of the booklet "Alcool, ami ou ennemi?" (Ndjaména: Imprimerie du Tchad, 2001).

As actions taken, the CEDIRAA organized:

- 1) The leadership training for alcoholics in N'Djamena and in the provinces;
- 2) The animation for young people and adults in parishes, schools, associations, universities and private companies;
- 3) Actions with women producing alcoholic beverages to convince them to abandon this destructive production and train them to other income generating activities better than the trade in alcohol;
- 4) Training of teachers in pedagogy in alcohol;
- 5) A follow up of alcoholics;
- 6) A work with the government to implement the legislation on alcoholic beverages;
- 7) broadcasting on radio and television and
- 8) The production of educational materials (booklets, a picture box, cassettes, posters, brochures and a video streaming on alcoholism).²

2. A Need of Making the Difference:

My own observation is that despite these actions organized by the CEDIRAA, evil is growing; consumption of alcoholic beverages is an alarming extent. It seems to me that the battle initiated by the Catholic Church against the abuse of alcohol is much more on social ground than it is on spiritual ground. It is important to know that the root of evil is in the heart of man. It is the spirit of man who determines him to use alcohol and then abuse it. Alcohol has its origin in the behavior of the spirit of man in face of himself, the society and especially in the face of life. As Zeller states it, "It is not the wine and alcohol

² This information is published in the brochure "KAÏ! L'ALCOOL CA COLLE!" and can be obtained at cediraa.tchad@yahoo.fr or by calling (00235) 22 52 29 89.

which go to man; it is the man, the sinner who goes to them. And it is also men who push to drink alcohol to excess "[my translation].³ If so, what better book than the Bible can help solve these problems of life and spiritual practices? Who better than Jesus Christ can give a positive destiny of man on the social and spiritual grounds? That is why Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32). He adds, "... everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:34-36).

With all this in mind, I believe that the Christian 12 Steps to recovery based on biblical truth will be a powerful tool to transform many lives better than the actions of CEDIRAA if both Protestant and Catholic Church leaders are trained to use them wisely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I do not mean that social actions toward alcoholics are worthless. Instead, I am convinced that true recovery must go beyond social needs and seek the alcoholics' eternal salvation.

About a Project that Helps Other Organizations Fighting against Alcoholism in Chad Question Their Approaches

Besides CEDIRAA I must mention Blue Cross and Alcoholics Anonymous whose activities are not negligible in Chad.

1. Blue Cross in Chad:

Chad Blue Cross is a Christian organization to fight against alcoholism and other addictions.

³ Georges-Albert Zeller, *La Bible, le vin et la croix-bleue* (Lausanne: Agence de la Croix-Bleue, 1983), 45.

Its working method is prevention through a broad outreach in organizing therapy groups and support for "patients" for their recovery.

Internationally, Blue Cross was first created in Switzerland in 1877 by Pastor Louis Lucien ROCHAT and in Chad in 1989 where it was officially recognized in 1994. Pastor Jerome ALTANA is the Founding President.

In Chad then, Blue Cross is present in N'Djamena and in the provinces. It has over 800 members spread throughout the territory of Chad.

It works with churches and organizations working for the same purpose as the Chadian Network for the Fight against Drugs, the Forum of Youth Chadians, etc.⁴

As activities, Blue Cross:

- Performs visits in churches to talk about alcohol;
- Organize training in alcohol and the accompaniment of an alcoholic;
- Accompanies people with alcohol problems and who want help;
- Organize awareness campaigns on September 21 of each year which is the " Blue Cross Day without alcohol";
- Collaborate with other organizations to fight against alcohol and other drugs;
- Work with the Ministry of Health for the project of developing the national policy on alcohol.

As a Christian organization, Blue Cross Chad is supposed to do an effective job of transforming lives in relation to alcohol abuse. However it faces a difficulty in working with churches. During the training seminar for pastors and church leaders in the 21st of January 2012 mentioned above, Mr. Djikoloum MAGOURNA, a leader of the Blue

⁴ Booklet "Alcool, ami ou ennemi?", 26.

Cross Chad has testified that Chad Christians view Blue Cross as a sect and do not trust it. He considered this distrust of Churches as a handicap for a good job of raising awareness and was pleased that the project "Mobilizing the Chadian Church to understand treat alcoholism" proposed by Pastor Mardochee Nadoumngar has come in God's time to strengthen the work of the Blue Cross Chad. For this, Mr. Djikoloum encouraged seminar participants to give their hand of fellowship to Pastor Mardochee for the effective carrying out of this project.

My personal observation is that the Blue Cross' approach of work, though Christian, does not point enough to the word of God and especially to Jesus Christ as powerful releasing agents from the bondage of alcoholism. That is why I suggest that this lack should be filled by the approach of our Christian 12 Steps to recovery for a better result.

2. Alcoholics Anonymous in Chad:

"Alcoholics Anonymous" (AA) is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problem and help others recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

The association began in 1935 from the meeting of a broker in New York and an Ohio surgeon who had been "hopeless" drunkards. They founded Alcoholics Anonymous because they wanted to help other people who suffer from the disease of alcoholism and to stay sober themselves. AA grew with the formation of autonomous groups, first in the U.S., then worldwide. These groups gather men and women of all races, nationalities,

religions, social environment. There is no fee or registration fee.

By example and friendship of recovered alcoholics, new members are encouraged to move away from the first drink "one day at a time." Rather than swearing never to drink, AA focus their efforts on not to drink today. They begin to put some order in their confused way of thinking and get rid of their negative thoughts following the 12 steps of AA recovery to guide them to a happy and useful life.

Regular meetings allow members to help each other stay sober and to share their problems. Since they are all alcoholics, AA members have a great mutual understanding.

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of AA. They are a society of equals. It is their rehabilitation program they are trying to communicate, not individuals who participate in this program. The anonymity vis-à-vis public information is guaranteed for all AA, especially for newcomers, that their AA membership will not be disclosed.⁵

In Chad, AA started in 2001 from a contact that the sister Monique Laurine of CEDIRAA established between a Chadian (I conceal his name) and AA in France. There are currently three groups of AA in Chad (N'Djamena, Moundou, and Doba). Members are a very few but some of these brave people who have acknowledged their alcoholism are already starting to live in joy without alcohol.

In an interview with a Chadian leader of AA (I conceal his name because of their anonymity), he told me that at first people came to their meetings and later they do not come because Alcoholism is a complex disease. When these people fall into alcoholism, they are ashamed and do not come to meetings. Alcoholism is also a complex disease because some families do not seek to understand why someone is an alcoholic. Rather than trying to understand him, they judge, criticize and insult him. Therefore, the

⁵ Booklet "Alcool, ami ou ennemi?", 24.

alcoholic gets out of the house and falls into his intoxication. Under these conditions, the official said, the AA in Chad could disappear.

In my opinion, AA members do not rely solely on the word of God and especially on Jesus Christ for their recovery. Rather, as their second Step of the recovery states, they have come to believe that a Power greater than themselves could restore them to sanity. And according to Dr. Barton, this Higher Power could be whatever works for them: God, Cosmos, Sir, Allah, or something else.⁶ This vagueness about the nature of God forced Gilley to strongly disapprove this approach when he writes,

Twelve-Step recovery groups cannot bring a person into a right relationship with God -- for their god is not the God of Scripture, their prayers are to whatever power(s) they choose, their bible is not God's Word, and their salvation is from "addiction," not sin. The devil is more than happy to provide sobriety in the place of salvation. AA and recovery movements are false religions with false religious systems, attempting to lead mankind to a better and happier life, yet bypass the cross of Christ.⁷

In the Christian 12 Steps of recovery, however, the emphasis is firmly on God the Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ who have the power to break free from alcoholism, to restore true freedom to those who seek it sincerely. Without Jesus Christ's sustaining grace, reading the word of God and prayer, even self-discipline to get away from the first drink "one day at a time" can hardly work.

About the Information that Will Help Guide Further Research

I expect the outcomes of this project to be the information that will help guide further research beyond my D.Min. thesis and answer the question how to help people

⁶ Dr. Melanie Barton's article "Episode 13 The Twelve Steps: Their History and Meaning" www.thedrmelanie.com/.../episode_13_the_twelve_steps.doc (accessed December 11, 2011).

⁷ Gary Gilley "12-Steps Recovery Programs" <http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/codep/12step.htm> (accessed February 7, 2012).

who are affected by the drinking of their family members; and what negative attitudes the relatives and friends of alcoholics should learn to avoid in order to help them get the needed recovery. As example I will mention Al-Anon for the future, and Codependency study.

1. Al-Anon for the Future:

Al-Anon is a fellowship of men, women, and children who, unlike Alcoholics Anonymous who seek to solve the problems of alcoholics, aim to help themselves and others to live with the problem of alcoholism.⁸ Although Al-Anon has its roots in AA and is closely associated with it, it is generally understood that Al-Anon's primary purpose is not to try to stop alcoholics from drinking but to help those who have been affected by that drinking lead saner, happier, and productive lives.⁹ There are also meetings called Alateen for younger members.

a) *The good of sharing*

Al-Anon members believe that the way to help themselves is to share willingly with others what they receive in serenity of spirit and in enriched lives. Just as sharing is helpful to alcoholics, so it can benefit all those in the Al-Anon Family Groups as they claim it,

When we Al-Anon members talk with one another and exchange ideas, we are able to apply the experience of others to our particular problems. We discover we have just as much to gain from the Steps as the alcoholics have. We find that the alcoholic experience has made us sick, too, and that we need emotional sobriety as much as alcoholics need freedom from alcohol.¹⁰

A generation ago wives and husbands of alcoholics struggled for years through their boring and sometimes risky lives without help. Today thousands of relatives and

⁸ *Al-Anon Family Groups*, 74-75.

⁹ *Al-Anon Family Groups*, 5.

¹⁰ *Al-Anon Family Groups*, 17.

friends of compulsive drinkers are seeking aid before the effects of someone else's drinking have ruined home life beyond repair or taken their toll of sanity and health. Not only spouses but parents, lovers and young or adult children of alcoholics are learning that they, too, can find comfort and a sense of security afforded by shared experience with a group.

Anyone who hesitates but at last decides to join the Al-Anon Family Groups will learn that Al-Anon members will give him real help and understanding. He will find friends among people who have been through the same agonizing experiences as his. He learns how they rose above their difficulties to live normal lives.

b) Misunderstanding about the Approach

Some people simply withdraw from the embarrassing situation caused by the alcoholic and avoid contact with the alcoholic's family. And non-alcoholics, anticipating such rejection, withdraw themselves and the family from social contacts. The more they withdraw the more frustrated and lonely they become. It is here that Al-Anon can be helpful. Talking with others who have lived with the same problem bring relief and hope to the confused non-alcoholic member of the family.

Al-Anon will help them to realize they did not cause the alcoholism and cannot be expected to cure it. They see that they can and should get back into the world. From the small, sympathetic group of Al-Anon they are prepared to move out into social relationships where they will not be subjected to the criticism they have known in the past.

c) Children of Alcoholics

A home with an alcoholic parent is a boring and difficult environment for children. They are immersed in confusion, looking for security. Unhappy within the home, they are often just as miserable outside it, exposed to mocking from schoolmates and pity from adults. Fear, lack of sleep and food, and lack of guidance and normal family affection may make children withdrawn or openly hostile.

Parents in Al-Anon begin to learn to adjust to the problem with understanding. The children find attitudes more consistent and dependable. This relieves their confusion and anxiety. They gradually understand that the drinking is not caused by either their own or their sober parent's behavior. Hope is renewed for these young people when they discover that the alcoholic is ill. Many are helped to a better understanding of the problem by joining Alateen groups.

Alateen is Al-Anon for younger members. It follows the same program and can be a vital link in the family recovery.¹¹ Alateen meets the needs of young people whose lives have been or are being affected by someone else's drinking. They learn alcoholism is a disease. Alateen helps them to become individuals. In trying to work the Twelve Steps, they are given a new beginning. Faith in a Higher Power, perhaps for the first time, offers peace of mind and a sense of direction.

In my ministry perspective, these adults and children will be clearly taught to turn to God the almighty and to Jesus Christ for true recovery.

2. Codependency Study:

a) What is codependency?

¹¹ *Al-Anon Family Groups*, 32.

Codependency is a person's attitude of struggling with compulsion to rescue and take care of others. Such a person has difficulty setting boundaries, or recognizing his own worth.¹² The harmful effects of a drinker's alcohol addiction on the family are indisputable. Living with an alcoholic forces family members to adopt coping behaviors. In an effort to deal with the drinker, a family member may become codependent. "This is someone who becomes attached to the addict and his or her problems and who feels terribly threatened by possible loss of the relationship."¹³

According to Loghman, examples of codependent behavior may include:

- The drinker makes a mess; the codependent cleans it up.
- The drinker hides bottles; the codependent finds and discards them.
- The drinker is nasty; this feels like the codependent's fault.
- The drinker is irresponsible; the codependent becomes more responsible.
- The drinker spends irresponsibly; the codependent saves anxiously.
- The drinker threatens abandonment; the codependent clings even more.

In other words, codependent relationship causes one to feel responsible for the addict's feelings, thoughts, actions, choices, needs, wellbeing, and ultimately, the drinker's destiny. As a result, the codependent offers unwanted advice, feels compelled to help, gives more than he or she receives, and then feels angry, victimized, unappreciated, abused, and neglected. The more he or she sacrifices, the less respect the drinker will have for him or her.

¹² Unknown author "Codependency" <http://firstalliancechurch.net/codependency> (accessed february 7, 2012).

¹³ Kamran Loghman "Codendence and Alcohol Abuse – Identifying Codependent Behavior and Coping Strategies" http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Kamran_Loghman (accessed February 7, 2012).

b) Comparison between codependency and Christian teaching

If one compares codependency and Christian living, on the surface, codependence messages may sound like Christian teaching:

- Codependents always put others first before taking care of themselves. Aren't Christians to put others first?
- Codependents give themselves away. Shouldn't Christians do the same?
- Codependents martyr themselves. Christianity honors its martyrs, doesn't it?

Codependency says:

- I have little or no value, other persons and situations have all the value
- I must please other people regardless of the cost to my person or values
- I am to place myself to be used by others without protest
- I must give myself away
- If I claim any rights for myself, I am selfish

c) Biblical response to codependency

Jesus taught the value of the individual. He said we are to love others equal to ourselves (Mat 22:39; Mark 12:31), not more than. A love of self forms the basis for loving others. The differences between a life of service and codependency take several forms. Motivation differs. Does the individual give his service and himself out of free choice or because he considers himself of no value? Does he seek to "please people"? Does he act out of guilt and fear? Does he act out of a need to be needed, which means he actually uses the other person to meet his own needs, or to achieve his own goals? Clear difference may be made between codependency and Christian living as follows:¹⁴

¹⁴ <http://rollinghillscr.org/issues/codependency/> (accessed February 7, 2012).

- Service is to be an active choice. The person acts. Codependents react.
- Codependent behavior is addictive rather than balanced. Addictions control the person instead of the person being in charge of their life.
- Codependents have poor sense of boundaries. They help others inappropriately, that means their help creates dependency on the part of the other person rather than moving that person toward independence. They have trouble setting limits for themselves and allow other to invade their boundaries.
- Codependents have difficulty living balanced lives. They do for others at the neglect of their own well being and health. Christian faith calls for balanced living and taking care of oneself.
- Codependent helping is joyless. Christian service brings joy.

Codependents are driven by their inner compulsions. Christians are God-directed and can be free from compulsive behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Prior to writing this thesis, I had certain views of what alcoholism was and how it was to be treated. I was not as informed about the different views, teachings, and beliefs that have been adopted by various organizations, churches, and programs. What I have gained from doing this research is a better understanding of those views and how to apply them when ministering to the alcoholics. I will now share what I have learned from this research and how I will apply this knowledge in my future ministry.

It is important to know that alcoholism is a disease that is characterized by dependence on alcohol. This dependence is both mental and physical. The dependent person has lost the freedom to refrain from alcohol, he or she no longer controls its consumption; the need for alcohol monopolizes his thoughts and alters his behavior.

Alcohol is now generally spoken of as a complex disease, whose causes are many: those related to the person on biological, genetic and psychological grounds, as well as those related to his social and cultural environment. The alcohol dependence induces a physical need to drink, caused by lack; the body cannot function without alcohol. In addition the psychological need to consume, the dependent person has the impression of not being able to live without alcohol.

The problem of alcoholism is not just the person who consumes. Members of his family, relatives are particularly affected, emotionally and in their daily lives. They find themselves helpless as the person concerned. Dependence accounts for the whole family, divides and isolates them from the rest of the world. Feelings, thoughts and actions of each family member are as directed by the consumption of alcohol dependent person;

alcohol is no longer just an individual problem, it affects the whole family and even the society in which le alcoholics live.

Many consumers feel first positive effects when drinking alcohol: pleasure, relaxation and conviviality. Most people who drink alcohol in moderation can use it well throughout their lives. To drink safely, moderation is necessary. To moderate one's consumption is to drink the way not to have any problem and to not create problems to others.

But alcohol is a drug that acts differently in different individuals. In certain situations and for some people, a small amount of alcohol may already be falling into dependency.

By formulating the theme, "MOBILIZING THE CHADIAN CHURCH TO UNDERSTAND AND TREAT ALCOHOLISM," not only do I seek to answer the question of whether Christians can drink alcohol or not, but also to help pastors, Church leaders, and Christians understand the issue of alcoholism and treat it. In other words I seek to help them understand why people drink alcohol, how dangerous it is to drink too much alcohol, and how they can help those struggling with alcohol.

When seeking to answer the question of whether Christians can drink alcohol or not, I saw that both in Old Testament and New Testament fermented wine was used by men and women of God probably in a good way as they drank it with joy in their homes and especially during their feasts, as they offered it to their guests and even as drink offering to the Lord. Abundance of wine was viewed as sign of blessings from the Lord and its lack as sign of calamity. Besides its use for nourishment we saw too that

fermented wine was used for medical purpose to bring happiness to those who have bitterness in their heart, for its beneficial effect on wounds, on fatigue, and on illnesses.

I came to the understanding that all the biblical references to wine both positive and negative show that the moderate consumption of intoxicating wine is permissible in the Bible whereas the abuse of intoxicating wine or drunkenness is clearly condemned. Although Scripture commands abstinence for some people under special circumstances, it does not insist on it for all people under all circumstances.

To assert that the Bible allows moderate consumption of alcohol poses a big problem in evangelical environment in Chad, because for years the only conclusion was that the Bible strictly prohibits the consumption of alcohol. For proof, during the training seminar for pastors and church leaders that I organized January 21, 2012, two pastors have insisted that I delete this statement of my project; otherwise it will be a clear authorization for Christians to drink alcohol freely. In this case, I would contribute in leading several people to sin.

Another pastor suggested that I replace the phrase "the Bible allows moderate consumption of alcohol" with "the Bible tolerates the moderate consumption of alcohol." Another person suggested, "The Bible tolerates the moderate consumption of wine" rather than alcohol.

There are two problems here:

First, by looking in the dictionary we see that the verbs to authorize, to permit and to tolerate are synonymous and mean "let (something), not to prevent."

Second, in wine, there is alcohol and consuming wine abusively one gets drunk with negative consequences as the cases of Noah, Lot, and what the apostle Paul spoke of

in Ephesians 5:18, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery..."

I think it is not enough to say that the Bible strictly prohibits the consumption of alcohol to convince people not to drink. Despite this "law," many Christians drink in secret any way and live a life of hypocrisy that does not glorify the Lord. It is as if they should fear men rather than God. Several have become alcoholics because they cannot control their consumption. This is even why we write this thesis.

I believe we must clearly expose the biblical teaching and let each person make his choice. By asserting that the Bible permits moderate consumption of alcohol, I must clarify two things:

First, this permission is not an obligation to drink alcohol. A Christian convinced of alcohol-related harm can freely choose not to drink. That is why Paul the apostle says, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12); and then, "All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up" (1 Corinthians 10:23). It is true that these two verses speak of foods like meat sacrificed to idols, but I think they may also be mentioned regarding the consumption of alcohol.

Second, the wine of the Bible is not the same as strong liquors today. According to Harris we mentioned previously,

All the wine in ancient time was light wine that means not fortified with extra alcohol. Concentrated alcohol was only known in the Middle Ages when the Arabs invented distillation ("alcohol" is an Arabic word) so what is now called liquor or strong drink (i.e. whiskey, gin, etc.) and the twenty per cent fortified wines were unknown in Bible times. Drunkenness therefore was of course an ancient curse, but alcoholism was not as common or as severe as it is today. And in an agricultural age, its effects were less deadly than now. To avoid the sin of drunkenness, mingling of wine with water was practiced.¹

¹ R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* Vol 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 376.

The wine of the New Testament was not distilled liquor but was made by the process of natural fermentation. The alcoholic content probably did not exceed five or eight percent. The potency was further weakened by the practice of mixing wine and water. Also, the wine was drunk mostly in connection with meals. The modern tavern was unknown in Palestine. Moreover, on those occasions when drunkenness did occur, the disastrous social consequences were negligible in comparison with those in the highly mechanized modern society of our day.²

Therefore, the moderate consumption of alcohol permitted by the Bible must take into account the amount of alcohol in beverages one consumes and should not be taken for a license to drink all kinds of strong liquors that are produced today and that are dangerously injurious to human health.

I am convinced that if we clearly teach the word of God to Christians and leave them the flexibility to decide for themselves, they will be mature Christians who allow themselves to be lead by the Holy Spirit, rather than living in hypocrisy committing sin in secret as if they should fear men and not God.

Although the moderate use of wine can be inferred from positive references to wine in the Bible, Christians, regardless their freedom in Christ, must discern and choose between that which is merely permissible (to drink alcoholic beverages) and that which is beneficial and constructive (not to drink alcoholic beverages). Also, due to the biblical concerns regarding alcohol and its effects, due to the easy temptation to consume alcohol in excess, and due to the possibility of causing offense and/or stumbling of others, it is understandable why for many Christians to abstain from drinking alcohol is the preferred way.

Although I have shown that the Bible teaches that a moderate consumption of alcohol is permissible, in our current context where alcohol abuse is common, it would

² Howard H. Charles, *Alcohol and the Bible* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1966), 14-15.

benefit both the church and society to model abstinence as a viable Christian choice that can be defended from the Bible. Such modeling is certainly necessary by Christian leaders who might be called to help those addicted to alcohol to live a life of sobriety. For those in recovery from alcohol addiction, lifelong abstinence is the only sure way to freedom. For that reason, a leader who joins them in abstinence is modeling the virtue of self-control necessary to remain sober.

I also examined what the Bible says about drinking alcoholic beverages and how a repentant believer can recover from life controlling sins and particularly to a physical appetite such as to alcohol. I have suggested that progressive sanctification is the way for the Christian to embrace recovery from alcohol abuse, dependency, and addiction.

The main objective of this thesis is not to resolve the issue if YES or NO a Christian should drink alcohol, but rather to make known alcohol and its harmful effects and to suggest an approach to help alcoholics find recovery. The Christian 12 Steps to recovery is the approach I chose. I believe that the Christian 12 Steps to recovery based on biblical truth will be a powerful tool to transform many lives if pastors and church leaders at all levels are trained to use them wisely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Everybody needs Jesus. Only Jesus Christ has the power to set the captives free. The "Higher Power" model in the AA's approach is a major concern for me. Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life, and there is no other way to the Father but through Him (John 3:16). We should not light a lamp and place it under a table (Luke 8:16). We light a lamp and place it where everyone can see it and use it to light their path. I do not find the "Higher Power" model or even its principle used anywhere in Scripture.

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Matthew 9:37). We need to hear more teaching and preaching from our pulpits about alcohol addiction. Pastors and church leaders need to be more aware of the issues that face a person struggling with alcohol addiction. Churches need to be more involved today and make sure that Scripture is being taught and that we call upon the Holy Spirit at every meeting. If we are Christians, then we need to lead others to Jesus Christ, who is the one only Living Water able to eternally quench the thirst of the alcoholic with eternal life.

Any church which desires to minister to alcoholics should educate the members of their congregation about alcohol addiction. Mentors should be trained in the addiction area. There should be classes offered for conflict resolution, coping skills, anger management, life management skills along with a Christian Steps program. The goal is to give the person the tools they will need to live alcohol free for a life time.

Christ came to set the captives free and God gave us the scriptures to instruct us how to live our lives for Him in victory through obedience. We are able to accomplish this through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We as a church should never separate the work of the Holy Spirit from recovery for in Christ is true peace.

Such a work is not finished or perfect. One needs to improve it taking in account other questions that needs to be answered such as how to help people who are affected by the drinking of their family members; what negative attitudes the relatives and friends of alcoholics should learn to avoid in order to help them get the needed recovery; and many other aspects not addressed in this work.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY

1. Is alcoholism a real problem in the Church in Chad or not?

If yes, explain by quoting one or more concrete examples. If not, explain.

2. To your knowledge, what pushes Christians to drink alcohol?

3. What is their frequency of alcohol consumption (regularly or occasionally)?

4. Is a regular basis encouraged by the genre of the person (male or female)?

5. Is this frequency encouraged by the social condition of the person (rich, poor)?

6. Does this frequency change depending on the age of the person (older one gets more one drinks, or older one gets less one you drinks)?

7. What is the group age that is affected by alcoholism the most?

8. How does alcohol consumption affect the following areas of life?

a. Employment.

b. Family relationships.

c. Financial.

d. Spiritual life by following the Lord Jesus.

9. What are other consequences of alcohol that you can mention?

10. How can you help those struggling with alcohol (alcoholics) in your church?

11. How other do organizations such as "Blue Cross" and "Revival of Children of God's Servants" in our country help you to help those struggling with alcohol?

11. What are the concrete results of your ministry to those struggling with alcohol?

12. What are your expectations when you help those struggling with alcohol?

**APPENDIX B: SEMINAR OF JANUARY 21, 2012 AT LUTHERAN CENTRE IN
NDJAMENA, CHAD**

The participant's evaluation sheet

Full Name of Participant:

Participant's local church:

Participant's denomination:

Date:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 expressed your satisfaction or not with the content of this training. Check the box of your choice (less satisfied) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (very satisfied).

Content of teachings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Teaching # 1 Creating an awareness of the alcohol problem.										
Teaching # 2 Showing a biblical understanding of alcohol consumption.										
Teaching # 3 Showing a biblical understanding of progressive sanctification.										
Teaching # 4 Presenting The Christian Twelve Steps to sobriety and their biblical foundations.										
Teaching # 5 Showing how to start our first Twelve Steps group										

2. Answer YES or NO by circling YES or NO

- a. Overall the time reserved for the seminar is sufficient YES NO
- b. Overall time is well managed NO, NO
- c. Educational tools (documents and power point presentation) is satisfactory YES, NO
- d. The interaction of the participants (questions / answers, contributions) is satisfactory
- a. YES, NO

- e. Work in groups are satisfactory YES, NO
- f. Have you ever used the Christian 12 Steps to help those who suffer? YES, NO
- g. Do you think they are useful for your church or institution? YES, NO
- h. Do you want to put them into practice after the seminar by the grace of God?
YES, NO

3. Mention one thing you like most about this seminar
.....
4. Mention one thing you like least about this seminar
.....
5. How can we improve this seminar next time?
.....
.....
6. How can the Church in Chad better help alcoholics get rid of this addiction? (Use the back of this sheet).
7. How can the Church in Chad help people who suffer because their partners or family members are alcoholics? (Use back of this sheet).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION. GOD BLESS YOU!

APPENDIX C: THE 20 QUESTIONS

Take this 20 question test to help you decide whether or not you are an alcoholic.

Answer YES or NO to the following questions.

1. Do you lose time from work due to drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

2. Is drinking making your home life unhappy?

YES ___ NO ___

3. Do you drink because you are shy with other people?

YES ___ NO ___

4. Is your drinking affecting your reputation?

YES ___ NO ___

5. Have you ever felt remorse after drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

6. Have you ever got into financial difficulties as a result of drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

7. Do you turn to lower companions and an inferior environment when drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

8. Does your drinking make you careless of your family's welfare?

YES ___ NO ___

9. Has your ambition decreased since drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

10. Do you crave a drink at a definite time?

YES ___ NO ___

11. Do you want a drink the next morning?

YES ___ NO ___

12. Does drinking cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?

YES ___ NO ___

13. Has your efficiency decreased since drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

14. Is drinking jeopardizing your job or business?

YES ___ NO ___

15. Do you drink to escape from worries or trouble?

YES ___ NO ___

16. Do you drink alone?

YES ___ NO ___

17. Have you ever had a complete loss of memory as a result of drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

18. Has your physician ever treated you for drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

19. Do you drink to build up your self-confidence?

YES ___ NO ___

20. Have you ever been to a hospital or institution because of drinking?

YES ___ NO ___

What's your score?

If you have answered YES to any one of the questions, there is a definite warning that you may be an alcoholic.

If you have answered YES to any two, the chances are that you are an alcoholic.

If you answered YES to three or more, you are definitely an alcoholic.

(The test questions are used at Johns Hopkins University Hospital, Baltimore, MD, in deciding whether or not a patient is an alcoholic).³

³ <http://www.step12.com/alcoholic-20-questions.html> (accessed December 31, 2011).

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY CODEPENDENT BEHAVIOR⁴

If any of the following questions apply to your current relationship and living situation, you may be trapped in a codependent relationship:

1. Are you anxious before holidays or events fearing the drinker may disrupt them?
2. Have you ever lied to employers, relatives, or friends to hide alcohol use?
3. Have you ever hidden car keys, or thrown out alcohol to control the drinker?
4. Do you ever find yourself searching for empty bottles?
5. Have you ever felt embarrassed or compelled to apologize for the drinker?
6. Have you ever asked the drinker to stop or cut down on alcohol use?
7. Do other family members fear or avoid this person after they drink?
8. Do you have money problems because of someone else's drinking?
9. Do you feel if the drinker loves you he or she would stop to please you?
10. Have you made threats, such as, "If you don't stop drinking, I'll leave you?"
11. Do you think if the drinker just stopped your problems would be solved?
12. Are you feeling angry or perhaps depressed most of the time?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions you may be living with someone who is dependent on alcohol, and you may have become codependent.

⁴ Kamran Loghman "Codependence and Alcohol Abuse – Identifying Codependent Behavior and Coping Strategies" http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Kamran_Loghman (accessed February 7, 2012).

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